THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL LGBTQ+ LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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MIDLANDS ZONE

MARCH 2019 ISSUE 263

UK DRAG RACE
and the contestants they SHOULD have!

Kinky Boots
to SLAY in Brum Gay Village!

YSHEE BLACK
gives us her predictions

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SAVE
BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE CAMPAIGN

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LIVE IN BIRMINGHAM

+
GAY SCENE IN PICTURES + WHAT'S ON

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What's inside:

MARCH 2019

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43 NEW SCENE GUIDE!

Chic's Warren raises £3k for charity!

Birmingham scene personality and Chic manager Warren McLeod has raised in excess of £3k for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, in memory of his brother-in-law, Elliot Smith, who passed away in 2018.

A double-bill of fundraising activity on Saturday 23 February saw Warren take part in an afternoon sky dive from 14,000 feet before hosting 'a massive lineup of house music DJs' at Chic in the evening.

Talking about his mammoth day, Warren said: "It was a good day and night, and I'm delighted to have raised £3k+ for what is a very worthy cause. People can still donate at justgiving.com/fundraising/warren-mcleod."

You better werk!

Two of the country's biggest gay celebrities will feature in RuPaul's Drag Race when the Emmy Award-winning show launches its UK spin-off version later this year.

Graham Norton and Alan Carr have confirmed that they'll be joining RuPaul and Michelle Visage on the judging panel of the show. Searching for Britain's most 'faaabulous' drag queens, the sure-to-be popular series will air on BBC Three.

A long-time fan of Drag Race, Norton recently said that the prospect of being in the show made him 'ridiculously happy', adding: "I can't wait to see what the UK drag queens bring to the party, but they better weeeeerk!!!"

Carr, who's been a fan of RuPaul since the drag queen appeared on his Chatty Man talk show, said: "Drag Race is a success because you get to see that when you have a dream, it really cannot be held down, and it inspires the audience. Doing drag in a male-dominated culture is an act of treason, really, so they're my heroes."

Birmingham's LGBT+ social networking event – SOLD OUT!

A new networking event inviting people to rethink their relationship with social media is proving to be a real hit, if ticket sales are anything to go by. Fk Social Media launches at Eden Bar this month and is already SOLD OUT.**

The man behind the initiative to get people networking, Peter Warrington, said: "With increased awareness of the pitfalls of social media and the epidemic of loneliness, this is a good time to get out and try to meet people while supporting our local gay venues."

F**K! SOCIAL MEDIA

Last orders at The Wellington...

Owners of Birmingham's gay venue The Wellington will be calling last orders for a final time when the venue closes on Saturday 16 March. After 25 years of trading, proprietors Ken, Paul & Paul have decided to call it a day and retire.

But before they head off into the sunset, the Wellington team will host one last evening of fun and laughter, complete with special performances from Champagne Shirley and other drag acts on the local circuit.

Have ya heard?

More acts for Pride

The line-up for this year's Birmingham Pride festival just keeps getting better and better...

Gay icon Marc Almond, BRIT Award winner Kate Nash, chart-topper Sigala, R&B sensation MŸA, pop newcomer Alice Chater and electronic superstars Faithless (playing a DJ set) are the latest acts to be announced for the massive Spring Bank Holiday get-together, joining '80s favourites the Human League in the main-stage line-up.

This year taking the theme of Love Out Loud, the two-day festival continues to be one of the UK's biggest Pride events. Other attractions include the Mixmag Arena, Los Angeles Cabaret Stage, Future Stage, Street Party & Women's Area. For discounted tickets or more information, visit birminghampride.com

Marc Almond

Faithless

Kate Nash

THE GALE: 50 YEARS ON – WE NEED YOUR PICTURES & STORIES!

One of Birmingham's first gay-specific venues turns 50 this year.

The Nightingale Club in Kent Street first opened its doors in 1969 and has been at the heart of the city's gay village ever since.

Next issue we'll be taking a look at how the Gale has changed over the past half-century, so we're asking our readers to share recollections and pictures of memorable times they've enjoyed at the venue down the years.

Got any old photos? Then email Editor@midlandszone.co.uk

Ariana headlines Manchester Pride

Manchester Pride has announced that Ariana Grande will be its main headliner for its Rainbow concert in August. As we went to press, Ariana occupies the No1 and No2 positions in the UK charts!

Niki's back in town!

X Factor finalist and Midlands Zone favourite Niki Evans makes a welcome return to Birmingham Hippodrome this month, kicking ass as Trish in the UK tour of Kinky Boots.

The Midlands-based performer is no stranger to the Hippodrome, having previously taken the lead as Mrs Johnstone in Willy Russell's Blood Brothers.

Speaking about her return to the venue this month, Niki told Zone: "I'm so excited to be coming home. Kinky Boots is a fun production with some amazing and fresh new talent as our lead men. And there's even a small part for an ageing dyke like me! Come along and be who you want to be..."

SEE OUR KINKY BOOTS FEATURE ON PAGE 30

Members of Birmingham City Council's Planning Committee carrying out a site visit on the former DV8 club

SAVE BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE

The LGBTQ community turn out in force at the Nightingale meeting

GAY VILLAGE PLANNING DECISION DELAYED!

Birmingham City Council's planning committee has delayed a decision about whether to reject or grant approval on a new apartment development in the city's Gay Village.

A decision on the planning application, which is to build 116 new residential apartments in a nine-to-12-storey building - following the demolition of existing buildings including Amusement 13 (formally DV8) - is now not going to go before the committee until mid-March at the earliest.
A new committee date is yet to be agreed.

The local LGBTQ community has been objecting to the planning application, as it could stop the Nightingale Club, one of the city's main gay venues, from operating effectively.

Council planning officials were set to bring the case before the planning committee on Thursday 28 February, but are still awaiting further advice from Regulatory Services.

The Regulatory Service department will investigate, among other things, the impact of sound from the nearby Nightingale Club. It's likely that, if approved, the planning application will be subject to a series of sound-proofing conditions, in order to allow the gay club to operate unhindered.

Cllr. Gareth Moore

Once the Regulatory Service advice has been received, it's understood further legal advice will be sought by planning officials prior to bringing the development before the committee for a final decision.

Erdington's Conservative member, Councillor Gareth Moore (pictured), commented: "I welcome that Regulatory Services are doing due diligence to make sure that they consider all the noise implications that the planning application will have for the Nightingale. I hope it can be brought back to committee soon, and I hope colleagues will endorse refusal of the application for the reasons the LGBTQ community has set out in terms of protecting Birmingham's Gay Village."

Around 100+ people from the Birmingham LGBTQ community turned up at the Nightingale Club on Thursday 7 February to make their voices heard, and to ask Birmingham City Council planning committee members to help Save Birmingham Gay Village by rejecting the application.

The planning committee councillors present listened to all those who wanted to speak, with passionate views being expressed by Steve Ball, Steph Keeble, Mac Clarke, Bill Gavan, Terry Runcorn, Gabe Capes, Lee Clarke and many more.

WHAT THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY NEEDS TO DO NOW TO PROTECT THE FUTURE OF THE ENTIRE GAY VILLAGE!

SAVING THE BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE CAMPAIGN is not just about the recent planning application (see opposite), it's also about ensuring that we, the LGBTQ community, can safeguard our safe space within the Southside area in the long term.

So how can we achieve this?

Well, possibly the most effective way is to take our campaign to the council chiefs. Birmingham City Council as a planning authority can put in place an official policy for future development within the Gay Village. They can protect it by ensuring that any future development is sympathetic and complementary to the gay bars & clubs and the overall nighttime economy.

A policy like this has already been actioned for other parts of the city.

Could this man help SAVE THE ENTIRE GAY VILLAGE?

Councillor John Cotton

And Councillor Gareth Moore agrees that a policy should be put in place to protect the nighttime economy, including the Gay Village.

So the Birmingham LGBTQ community first needs to take its campaign to Councillor John Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion Community Safety & Equalities on Birmingham City Council.

We need him to put forward the kind of policy statement we're suggesting and then to get the entire council to back it!

That official council policy should then ensure that any future planning applications in the Gay Village, whether they be for shops, apartments or offices, will be considered only if they are sympathetic to, and will enhance, the LGBTQ area.

An official policy like this would not only help safeguard venues like Eden Bar and The Village Inn from future planning applications for land around their locations, it could also safeguard those venues from the possible threat of being demolished when their leases run out - with future planning applications being rejected outright by the planning authorities!

If you want to lend your support, 'LIKE' our SAVE THE BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE CAMPAIGN on FACEBOOK...

SAVE BIRMINGHAM GAY VILLAGE CAMPAIGN

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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF QUEER AS FOLK

Can you believe that it's 20 years since Russell T Davies' Manchester-based drama, Queer As Folk, launched on our TV screens?

First aired on Channel Four on 23 February 1999, the show became an instant hit with its candid portrait of the lives of three central characters living in Manchester's Gay Village.

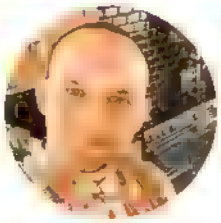
Often controversial, Queer As Folk regularly attracted in excess of three million viewers but was frequently criticised by gay campaign groups for not tackling serious issues facing the LGBT community, such as HIV/AIDS and an equal age of consent.

Twenty years on, the programme is seen as a milestone in the media's representation of the LGBTQ community. It also empowered many individuals to openly declare their sexuality

Share your most memorable moments of Queer As Folk on our Facebook page

Here's what some of YOU had to say...

Chris Routledge
"It's making me feel old, but it only seems like yesterday."



Scott W L Ford
"Remember it too well, was fabulous. Would love it to come back on our screens."

Dan Cox-Stone
"Certainly helped me gain courage. It was amazing."

EXCLUSIVE POLL REVEALED!

GAY VOTE ON BREXIT!

With the important BREXIT voting dates of 12, 13 and 14 March looming for Theresa May's deal, Midlands Zone carried out a snap Brexit poll, to which 1,053 people responded - and the results make for very interesting reading indeed!

We asked pollsters how they had voted in the 2016 referendum and 2017 general election. We discovered that the LGBTQ community vote in both instances had been extraordinarily similar to the actual outcomes (within just 1% point difference of the final results). So in asking the community about the *future*, there's every reason to suppose that our poll, while not scientifically based, may well provide an accurate reflection of what could happen.

And what's clear from the results is that the Midlands LGBTQ community is just as divided as the country on the issue of Brexit.

So exactly what does the poll suggest gay voters want now? Well, a second referendum appears to be the favoured option for just over half of voters - not a resounding majority by any means. And even if there were to be a second referendum, gay voters and the country would still, by all accounts, be split more or less down the middle

Whether it be 48% versus 52% in either direction, Brexit has certainly created more division than anything else in our recent history

Love it or hate it (and most seem to hate it), Theresa May's deal might well be the only tangible way of putting Brexit behind us, healing the divide and trying to unite us again.

BREXIT REFERENDUM 2016

How did you vote in the 2016 referendum?

BREXIT CHAOS

What would you like to see happen next?

SHOCK VOTING INTENTIONS

Whilst our exclusive poll was predominantly about Brexit, it was the voting intentions in a possible forthcoming general election that showed the most alarming results - especially for both the Labour Party and the Conservatives.

It showed evidence that Brexit could well have broken the two-party system. How the British public voted in the general election in 2017 compared to how gay pollsters voted was uncannily similar:

	2017 Actual	2017 Gay Poll	2019 Gay Poll
Conservative	44.7%	45%	29%
Labour	42.7%	41%	27%
Independent Group	N/A	N/A	17%
[illegible]	5.6%	7%	9%
UKIP	4.2%	5%	10%
Greens (or others)	1.9%	2%	8%

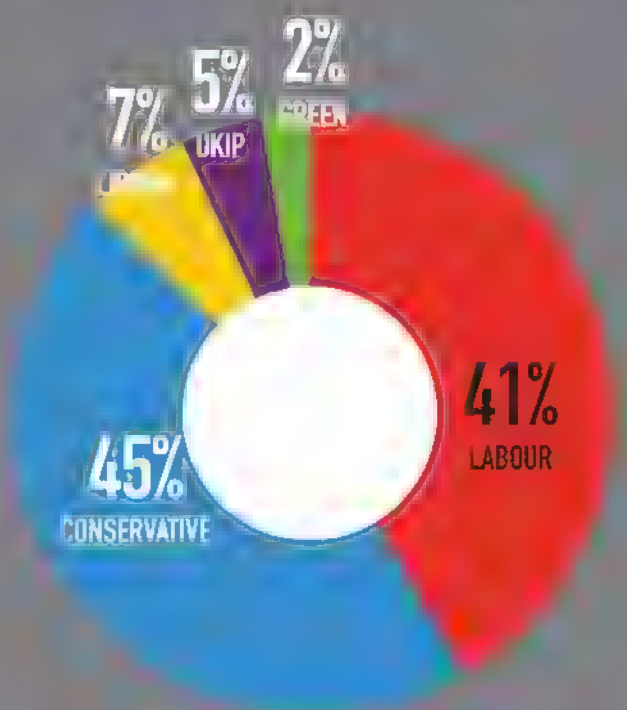
However, when looking ahead and contemplating a 2019 general election, it would seem that the gay voters in our poll, and perhaps the British public, have opened their eyes to how the politics of *party* interest and *self*-interest has stopped politicians working together in the *national* interest. Politicians from all parties should perhaps be careful about what they wish for on both sides of the debate!

SECOND REFERENDUM VOTE

How would you vote in a second referendum?

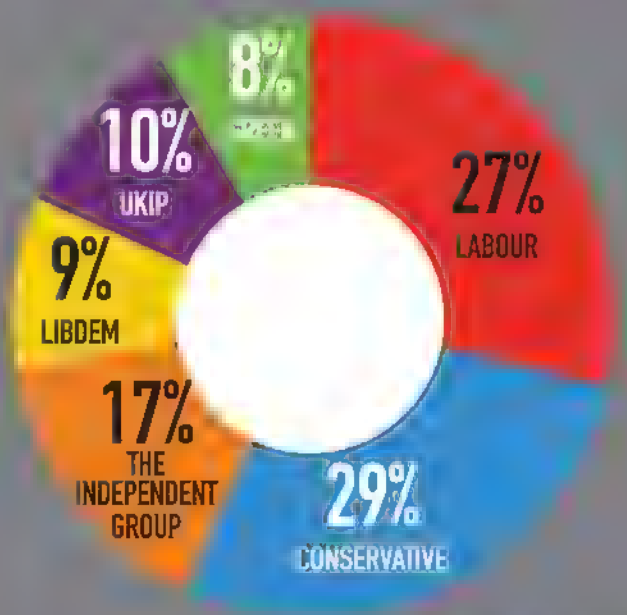
GENERAL ELECTION 2017

How did you vote in the general election?



GENERAL ELECTION 2019

Who would you vote for today?



LET'S TALK:
The Lacey Lou Column

Social media: TOOT or BOOT?

I was born in the 1990s, and as I grew up, I frequently heard the words, "GET OFF THE INTERNET, LACE - I NEED TO USE THE BLOODY PHONE!"

If you know of dial-up, you'll know the struggle, babes.

In terms of technology, my generation didn't grow up with a smart phone or tablet; neither existed. It was flip phones the size of your forearm and computers that took approximately 100 years to load anything.

Ah yes, the good old days!

In my teens, the obsession most of us had with MySpace, Bebo and Facebook began. I was hooked - you couldn't get me off of them!

The amount of hours I would spend cultivating the online presence of a party emo gal through html codes, or choosing the perfect song for my page, was absolutely shocking

A vital requirement of the MySpace song was that it reflected your current mood, because, of course, you were too socially inept to talk about emotions.

There was always room for improvement on the page because there was always room for improvement in terms of myself. I always wanted to be funnier, more beautiful, more unique

And so social media sank its teeth into me and damaged my self esteem. We can all relate to that, right?

Present-day me, I'm a freelance artist and event organiser, so the use of social media is crucial for my business and I spend a lot of time on it - I will sit for hours scrolling through photos and videos on Instagram. Although I've worked on my self esteem a lot and would say I'm a confident person, I do experience pangs of envy and jealousy from time to time

We all know that these social media images are cultivated and staged. Jennifer or Toby might *look* happy with great abs, but we know they're probably sneaking a cheeky fag and eating leftovers from three days ago, just like the rest of us.

"I'm not interested in buying jewellery that covers my cats butthole"

F**K! SOCIAL MEDIA

Birmingham's first LGBT+ networking event to be held in March at Eden Bar SOLD OUT fast

So why do we get these unhealthy feelings, and what long term effect are they having on us?

TEARING US APART

It's all about marketing, baby. We're in the era of sell, sell, sell. And this filters through everything that we see - including, you guessed it, on social media.

What were once platforms focused on connecting us have now become platforms for tearing ourselves apart due to our low self esteem.

Scroll through and it's constant adverts. And the adverts during videos make me want to throw the phone at the wall. No, I'm not interested in buying jewellery that covers my cat's butthole from wish.com (yes, it does exist - look it up).

Advertising is everywhere, on every platform, and its influencers are being paid to sell it to you so that you can look just as good as they do.

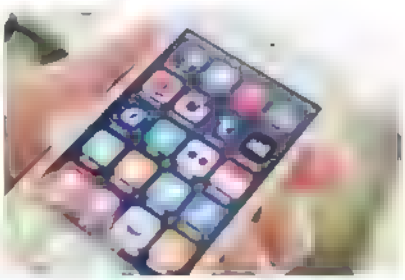
DON'T FEEL GOOD ENOUGH

But guess what? No matter how much we buy, we still don't feel good enough - and our bank balance is probably groaning under the strain of it all. It's toxic. These companies know it and make a lot of money from us. In the words of Thorgy Thor: Oh, Jesus... gross.

It's taken me most of my 20s to grapple with the self esteem issues that social media has created and amplified. I will always be podgy, always have hair that never sits right and always spill things down myself. And all of that is absolutely okay, because all of that is what makes us human, interesting and loveable

Who do these big corporations think they are to dictate to us what's beautiful and how we should look? It's *our* life and *our* journey. We can either spend years worrying about fulfilling ridiculous expectations, or we can choose to say f**k it and try to love ourselves each day.

That positive energy will eventually lead to a healthier mindset and a greater love, not only for ourselves but also for those around us



TOP 5 TIPS

So what can we do to combat the negative impact of social media on our self-esteem? Here's a Lacey Lou guide that I mentally follow whenever I'm scrolling through social media...

1. The smiles are usually staged. No one likes to see sad people. They're probably just as miserable as you, so don't worry.

2. If someone's being paid to sell it to you, if it's really cheap or it's currently in fashion, don't buy it.

3. The reviews are fake. If it's cheap, it won't last, and if it's in fashion, you'll wear it a few times and then get bored when it becomes outdated.

4. Abs aren't for special people. You too can achieve a magnificently muscular midriff. But let's face it, you enjoy other things too, like sinking pints and wolfing down burgers - both of which are far more fun than abs at this point in your life.

5. You're beautiful as you are, bab; it's society's attitude that needs the makeover

TWITTER: Carry on the chat @laceyloulayton

THIS GAY LIFE:
The Stephen Spinks Column

GAY ERASED

Actor Olivia Colman

Looking back through history, you could be forgiven for thinking LGBTQ communities didn't exist before the dawn of the 20th century. Of course, we know that's a fallacy, the invention of far-right thinkers, religious despots or people without much imagination. But in truth, scouring the archives, the second-hand books or any ancient prestigious library, you'll be hard-pressed to track down in the many pages of the countless books written over the last few hundred years, an open and honest account of same-sex love.

The Greek tragedies aside, books depicting strong gay stories, fact or fiction, remained few and far between until the late Victorian period. Sure, Shakespeare's sonnets have homoerotic undertones, and Oscar Wilde courted controversy because of the illicit content of his various writings, but these examples are exceptions.

As a general rule, outside the sphere of artistic literature, our LGBTQ lives have been relegated, omitted or expunged. We have so often been erased.

Any civilisation is characterised by its past. It is in looking back with a good dose of navel gazing that we find our collective identity. Nations rise and fall and people come and go, as do attitudes and societal norms. Yet as an LGBTQ community, the history of our people is often lost to us. We don't inherit a societal rulebook from our families, nor are we taught the great deeds of our gay ancestors. So as we start out on our lifelong personal journeys, how do we discover our community identity if we don't know much about those who have gone before us?

It provokes a deep and meaningful question: what is the real, tangible impact of gay erasure?

> **"recovery from an STI is also a fact played out on screen. And it doesn't stop there either..."**

I recently went to see two new and fabulous films at the cinema. Mary Queen Of Scots and The Favourite. The first directed by Josie Rourke and featuring Saoirse Ronan as Mary and Margot Robbie as her rival and cousin, the great Elizabeth I, is a blockbuster tipped for significant success.

BISEXUALITY REVEALED

But as the pundits applaud the right royal performances, I can't help but feel excited for an altogether different reason. This boundary pushing film marked the first time that I'd seen Mary's husband, Henry, Lord Darnley (played by Jack Lowden), portrayed as he really was, a bisexual man living in the 16th century and sleeping with both his wife and his male lovers.

Seems simple enough. And yet, turning back to the history books of the last 300 years, you could be forgiven for thinking that Hollywood had once more been working its magic, spinning a yarn to sell a good story. But it hadn't.

Only in recent years, as hard fought for

"LGBTQ lives have either been relegated, omitted or expunged"

" We have so often been ERASED "

LGBTQ rights have been won, have societal attitudes begun to soften. And as this has happened, so have academic historians, once reluctant to discuss the sexuality of historical figures, begun to move with the times.

Younger, more liberal historians in particular are leading the charge, more rounded in their outlook and not threatened by sexuality. They have started to look back through the archives and sift the evidence passed down from generation to generation. In so doing, they've discovered the gay histories of people such as Henry, Lord Darnley - histories which, until now, have simply been ignored or erased. But not all historians have been so open-minded...

NOT LOVERS, 'CONFIDANTES'

Judging by the many sniffy reviews about the on-screen portrayal of Darnley, it's evident that there are still those who see great merit in the business of gay erasure.

Darnley was quite the character. Second cousin to his wife, Mary, Queen of Scots, he too had a claim to both the Scottish and English thrones. He was witty, flamboyant and something of a twink at court. Mary fell for him instantly

However, following their marriage, she realised that he had other tastes, and the entourage of beautiful men he kept close by meant she would not be the sole recipient of her husband's affections.

Darnley's reciprocated love for David Rizzio, one of the Queen's principal advisors, is explored in the film, with the two men dancing and then waking up in bed together the next morning. Darnley's recovery from an STI is also played out on screen. And it doesn't stop there either. Rizzio's queerness is explored too - one scene has him cross dressing and declaring himself a sister to the Queen and her ladies.

In the history books, Rizzio's sexual encounters with his mistress's husband are whitewashed, so often reduced to a throw-away comment that Darnley saw him as his 'only governor'. It's poor historiography, masked in a thick layer of homophobia.

Too many old academics, many still writing, remain adamant that some of their key historical subjects couldn't possibly have been gay. Too often characters from history who were close to people of the same sex and, reading between the lines, were clearly in intimate and passionate same-sex relationships, are marked down as 'friends', 'very close friends' or 'confidantes'.

With the absence of explicit evidence of graphic sexual activity (why would most of us leave this behind?), historians seem happy to view an absence of dirty laundry as an absence of gay fact. It's a poor argument.

CUT ADRIFT FROM GAY PAST

This feels to me like a conscious and concerted attempt to erase our history. The authors of these books hold a prejudice that screams out in their work; the silence is deafening Such views damage our collective understanding of our LGBTQ past, and leave the later generations of gay, lesbian, bi and trans people without a link to their history. Our ancestors are closeted in death, and we are left adrift as a result.

And so we come to the second movie I saw: The Favourite, directed by Yorgos Lanthimos, with the Bafta and Oscar-winning Olivia Colman in the role of the busty Queen Anne. The film focuses on the relationships between Anne and her ladies in-waiting - Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough (played by the fabulous Rachel Weisz) and Abigail Masham (Emma Stone).

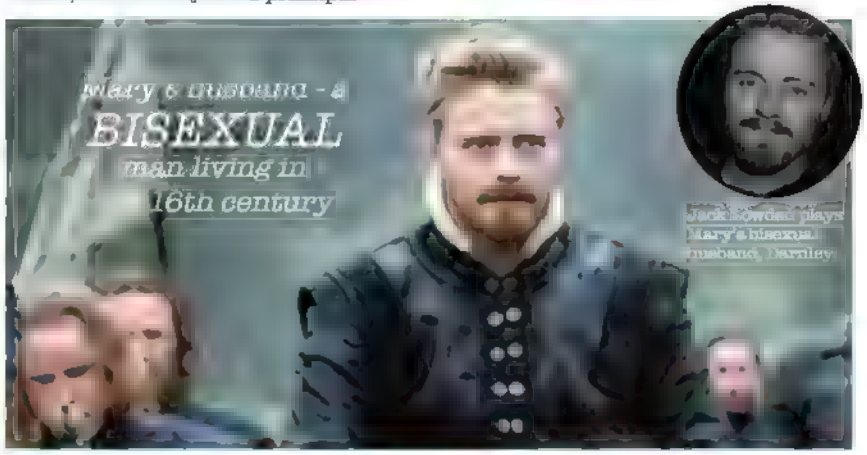
TACKLING GAY ERASURE

The often-overlooked story of Queen Anne is beautifully explored, the film bringing to the screen the lesbian relationships and subsequent rivalries between these three women. But, as expected, the old vanguard of sniffy conservative historians have come out in their droves to refute the notion that these women were anything other than 'friends', citing the queen's 17 children (many stillborn) as proof of her heterosexual only preference. The notion that she could be bisexual has not even been considered by many of these critics Ann, Sarah and Abigail have become the victim of homophobic erasure by some.

So where does this leave us? While films are often not a true record of our historical past, it seems that the medium of cinema is nowadays creating a liberating opportunity for our community, as stories and histories of previous generations are once more explored. And movies being movies, this means that these stories of gay history are reaching a global audience.

Perhaps now, more than ever before, the issue of gay erasure can be tackled head on. There is much to do and a long way to go, but I for one will be calling it out when I see it. I hope you do too, whenever you see that it's happening.

Together, we can reclaim our past from those who would see it disappear altogether.



NEXT MONTH: Can we be truly inclusive if we're divided by our tribes? TWITTER

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- Sexual health information
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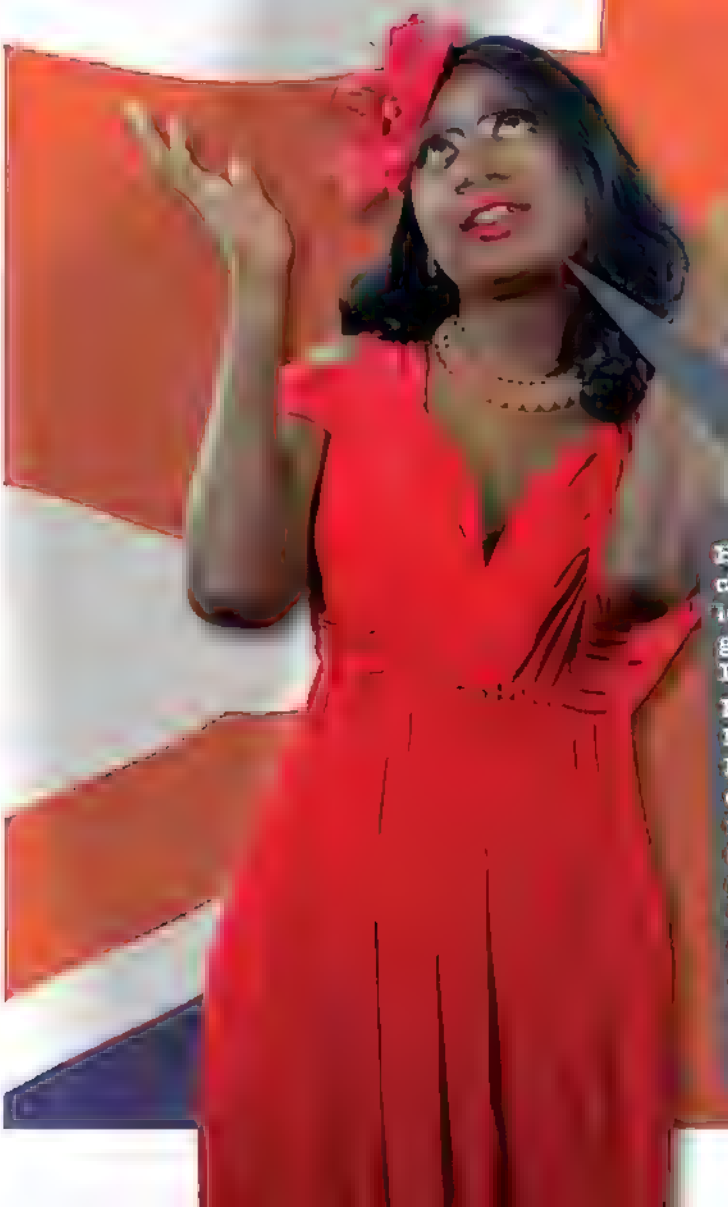
Gaylife is a service run by the Sexual Health Prevention Team in Stoke-on-Trent; funded and commissioned by Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

THE GREAT BRITISH DRAG RACE



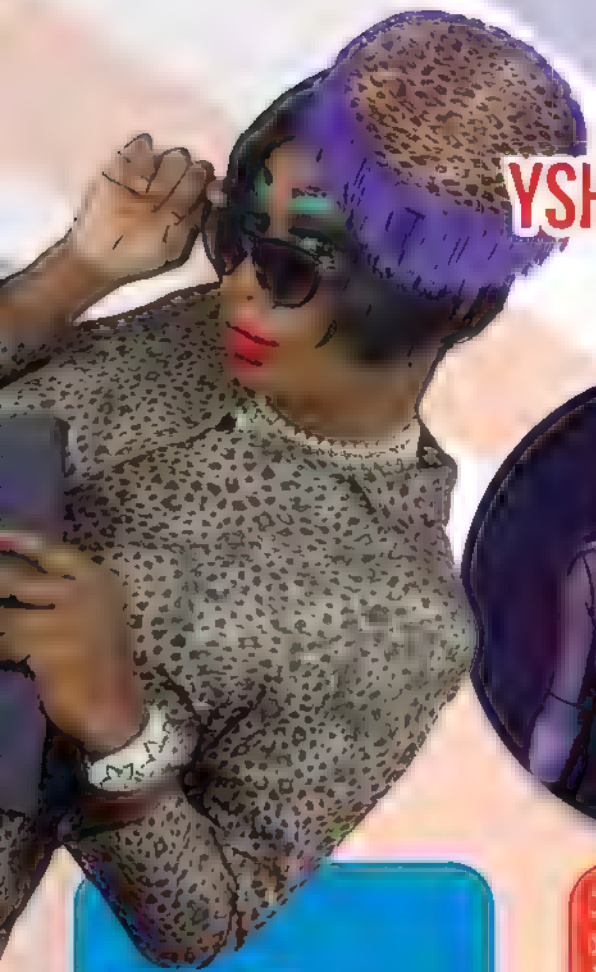
Hello, congregation! It's that church-loving tambourine-shaking loudmouth Yshee Black here, and I'm going to talk to you all about RuPaul's Drag Race UK!

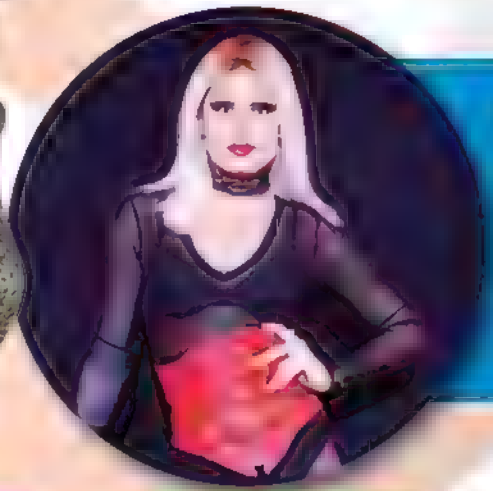
RuPaul has decided to bring the Emmy-winning show over to Great Britain OFFICIALLY! Numerous online sites have put forward their top picks for who should appear on the show - and guess what? Most of the fabulous acts don't live north of Watford!

So on the next two pages I'm going to give you a glorious list of queens to watch out for who reside outside of London! And if they get famous, don't forget Yshee Black told you first!

RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE UK

YSHEE BLACK'S TOP 10 PICKS...

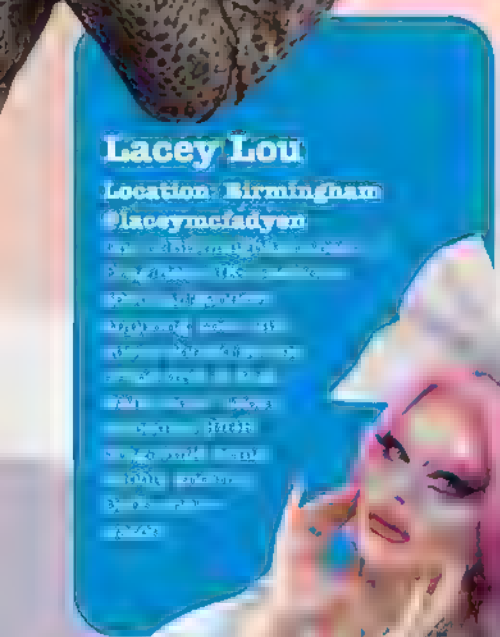




Scarlett

Location: Blackpool

@craigcolley_scarlett



Lacey Lou

Location: Birmingham

@laceymcfadyen

Miss Penny

Location: Birmingham

@miss_penny_dq

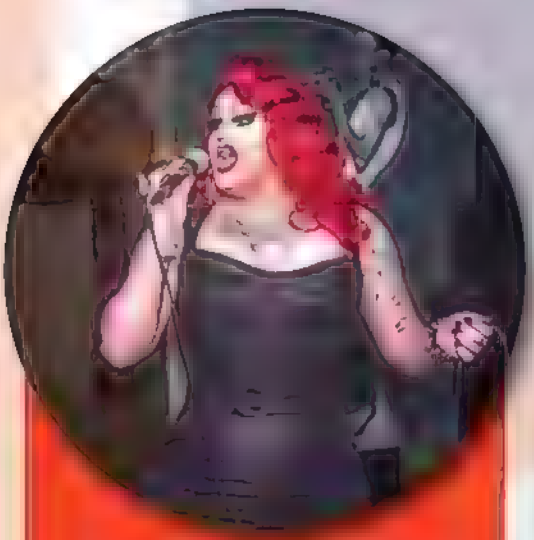
Is it time to show the kids how it's done? I think so! UK Drag Race should be all about cabaret, and I can't think of any other queen who would not only be fierce but also pay homage to the cabaret

Baby

Location: Brighton

@babyxroh

Her name may be Baby but make no mistake, she is a QUEEN. Still very new to drag, she's come on leaps and bounds in a short time. She's runway-ready and a dancing diva. When she starts to vogue, stand back because she's about to SLAYYYYYY!



Victoria Carriage

Location: Canterbury
@victoria_carriage

If there's one queen on this amazing island of ours who knows how to bring the party, it's Victoria Carriage! Victoria's a queen of the new-age nightlife scene – if you haven't watched her perform Feed 'em To The Lions, then your life isn't complete! She's the body queen with killer lipsyncs under her belt! Get ready world – it's PARTY TIME!

Lawrence Chaney

Location: Glasgow @lawrencechaney

This Glaswegian powerhouse is a real all-rounder bringing comedy, looks and fantastic entertainment to the table. She's representative of the A-class drag that's coming out of Scotland at the moment and HAS to be on the show.

Narcissa Nightshade

Location: Manchester
@narcissa_nightshade

Manchester's lovable ice queen! Former Kiki queen winner Narcissa is a formidable lady – eyes so sharp they could cut glass, but she'll also help you sew a dress!

Silly GAL

Location: Leeds @thesillygal

Well Woman Sexual Health Clinic

Exclusively for Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women

#WellWomanLBQ

Our **Well Woman Sexual Health Service** offers dedicated support and guidance to LBQ Women and enables access to appropriate sexual health and well-being services.

We provide a monthly Sexual Health Clinic exclusively for LBQ Women

www.blgbt.org/sexual-health
Tel: 0121 643 0821

Birmingham **LGBT**

Supported by umbrella

SMEAR Campaign

The thing about lesbians, bisexual women and straight women is that we pretty much all have the same bodies.

There are some details that change - width, height, colour, and some people have some bits missing - but basically we're all wandering around with the same model; the same arms, the same legs, the same heads, the same boobs, the same bum. In medical terms particularly, we have plenty in common with each other. Which is why we can all make do with the same surgeons, doctors, nurses, dressmakers and sexual health clinics

This basic fact, however, sometimes comes as a shock to some people.

To some extent, there has been a tendency for people to be too rigidly defined by their labels - gay, straight, bisexual etc - without recognising the intrinsic variability in human behaviour Medically there has been a tendency to look at what we *are*, rather than what we *do*. The linking factor between lesbians, bisexual women and straight women is that we are all women and in command of very similar bodies. The other linking factor is that our present label does not necessarily always define our behaviour, or our past behaviour. Human beings are naturally very good at grey areas

It's this sort of thinking that led to a particularly weird conversation I had with my GP. He asked me if I was sexually active, so I said that I was and that my partner was female. "So," he said, "you don't..." and looked down at his hands, which seemed to be attempting some sort of crude British Sign Language translation of penetrative sex. I assumed he was talking about penises, given the awkwardness of the conversation, so I said no

"It's up to you whether you have a smear test," he decided. Decisively. I asked some questions about the likelihood of developing cervical cancer without having sex with men, and he was undecided. As cancer is a familiar visitor in my family, I decided, very decisively, that I would have a smear after all.

It's notable that my GP not only had too little information about lesbians and cervical cancer - and a very poor grasp of British Sign Language - he also failed to ask me any questions about my past sexual partners, who may well have been male, for all he knew, thereby giving me exactly the same level of risk as straight women who'd previously had sex with men.

I went home and googled it (I hope the GP did something more comprehensive than this) and it wasn't all that easy to find out.

This might be one factor in why 18% of lesbian and bisexual women in the screening age bracket of 25 to 64 have never had a smear There's a whole load of misinformation out there, and uncertainty about whether women who've never had sex with men should even bother medical professionals with their vaginas

The plain truth of the matter, though, is that cervical cancer is a killer of women, and that the HPV virus (which leads to most cervical cancer) can be transmitted in lots of ways that don't always include penises. Licking, touching and sharing sex toys can all help to transmit the virus Currently, the biggest factor in developing cervical cancer is not having a smear test.

So, however you define your sexuality, treat yourself as a woman to the chance of a longer life and get yourself a smear test this year!

Birmingham LGBT Centre offers a host of services for females, including a dedicated women's LBQ clinic on the first Wednesday of every month

> "the virus can be transmitted in lots of ways that do NOT always include PENISES."

FACT CHECKER

17% 17 8% of lesbian and bisexual women of eligible screening age (25-64) have never been for cervical screening.

40% Research from the LGBT Foundation has shown that 40.5% of LGB women of screening age have incorrectly been told that they don't need to attend because of their sexual orientation. This has had a lasting impact of declining smear-test attendance in the LGB community.

75% Cervical screening prevents up to 75% of cervical cancers developing. Not attending your screening is usually the biggest risk factor for developing cervical cancer

36% In a survey carried out in 2017, 36% of lesbian, bisexual and other 'women who have sex with women' said that either a doctor or a nurse had assumed they were heterosexual.

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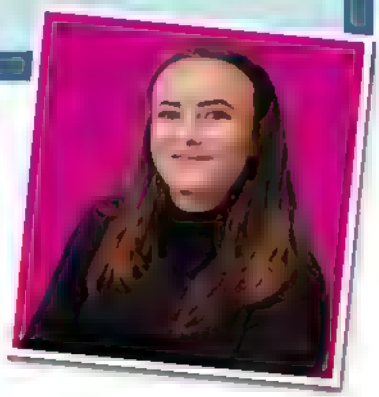
www.TheButtermarket.co.uk

We Are Family

ON THE BALL with ~~Steve~~ Ball

Jade



As this month includes LGBT+ Adoption & Fostering Week, we thought we'd ask Steve's daughter, Jade, to give her perspective on having two gay dads...

> "there is still a way to go with full acceptance of LGBT+ parenting"

I'm Jade, a 19-year-old university student, and I have two gay dads who I love very much. To me, it's nothing strange at all because I've grown up like this. In fact it's completely normal, and I never even think to bat an eyelid about it - and that's just as it should be in today's society. Sadly, though, it still isn't. Most of my peers, friends and people of a similar age, think it's quite strange that I have a dad and a stepdad who're married to each other. Whenever I tell them about my family, they all think at first that my stepdad is married to my mom. Don't worry, I soon put them right!

The fact that I do have to explain my family situation shows that, even in 2019, there's still a way to go with full acceptance of LGBT+ parenting. I still get told to be careful talking about the fact that I have two gay dads because of people not understanding. This baffles me, as I honestly believe that any couple, LGBT+ or straight, should be able to foster, adopt or raise a child as long as they're able to care for and provide for that child, put their needs first and give them all the love in the world.

Jade with her dads, Ian and Steve

I'm a very lucky young woman because I have the best of both worlds, and in reality I always have had: I have a mum who loves me to pieces, but I also have two gay dads who love me to pieces as well. But most importantly, I know that all of them would be there for me if I ever needed them.

For me, that's the most important thing a child can have - people close to them who let them know that they're loved and cared for. The sexuality of the parents shouldn't be a factor in who gets to love and nurture a child. It should be about the child and their happiness and wellbeing.

If only life could be that simple, and modern day society reflected how so many people feel about this.

Sandwell
Children's Trust
You can make the difference...
Foster with us
Wednesday 20 March,
6.30pm
Blackheath Library, B65 0EA
Monday 29 April,
6.30pm
Stone Cross Library
West Bromwich, B71 2LH
see our website
for details of all our events
www.sandwellchildrenstrust.org
and click on 'fostering' or call
0800 358 0899
JOIN US!

Have YOU ever considered FOSTERING?

Not everyone realises that *foster* families can come in all shapes and sizes. Maybe you're single, or part of a same-sex couple. Perhaps you've had children of your own - they may still be at home or might have grown up and flown the nest. Or perhaps you don't have children of your own.

Whatever your circumstances, whatever your experience, provided you can meet a few basic criteria, you can foster with Sandwell Children's Trust.

They do ask that you're over 21 so that you've got some experience of life, whether as a parent or not. They expect you to be able to show that you have an interest in childcare and a commitment to looking after children. And finally, you do need to have a spare room at home.

It takes a lot more than that to become a foster carer, of course - but if you can say 'yes' to these three things, and you're ready to do something that will change your life and the lives of the children to whom you offer a home, then contact Sandwell Children's Trust. They will talk you through the process - and who knows? It could just be the start of something amazing!

"It's the best thing we've ever done"

Jacqueline & Gaynor's Story

"Fostering has been brilliant for us. We love having children around the place, giving them a secure home, taking them on holidays and showing them what a stable, loving home should feel like before they go on to find their 'forever family'."

Jacqueline and Gaynor are foster carers with Sandwell Children's Trust. They specialise in looking after young children who are going through the process of being adopted or being found long term fostering matches.

"We didn't just fall into doing this," they say. "We had good jobs, and there was a lot to consider. But part of the process is looking at why you want to foster, how you will manage both in terms of your support network and your finances."

That was almost nine years ago. Since then, Jacqueline and Gaynor have fostered 29 children, some staying just a short time but others long enough to become part of the family, staying in touch and keeping Jacqueline and Gaynor up to date with their progress as they grow up.

"It's lovely having a great big extended family. We love nothing better than taking the children to Disneyland, and we go as often as we can. We tell everyone it's for the kids' sake, but we love it too!"

That's the key to being a good foster carer - you have to *love* it – as Jacqueline and Gaynor clearly do. But did they ever hesitate?

"It's a big step. And yes, you do wonder what reaction you'll get as a same-sex couple applying to become foster carers. Luckily we've never let anyone tell us what to do, and when we approached Sandwell, they were brilliant. The assessment process is there for a reason, and if fostering isn't right for you - for whatever reason - it will get picked up. But being gay or lesbian is not a reason to stop you becoming a foster carer. In fact, now we just wish we'd done it years earlier. So our message is simple: don't hesitate, just do it.

"It really is true what they say - if you have that nurturing instinct, if you have the time in your life and the space in your heart, you really can become a foster carer, whether you're gay or straight, single or a couple. We did, and it's the best thing we've ever done!"

Find out more about fostering at sandwellchildrenstrust.org

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A QUICKIE WITH JINKX MONSOON

RuPaul's Drag Race star Jinkx Monsoon took five minutes out of her busy schedule ahead of her Midlands shows to answer our quickfire questions...

BEST-KEPT BEAUTY SECRET Sleep. Period.

BEST THING ABOUT PERFORMING IN BIRMINGHAM I grew up with British sitcoms, and my sense of humour seems to resonate with British audiences. Birmingham is here for me and I am here for them.

BEST PUT DOWN (prefer not to answer)

BEST PIECE OF ADVICE EVER RECEIVED Don't read the comments!

BEST NIGHT OUT Oasis nightclub, San Francisco, thanks Heklina!

BEST NIGHT IN Watching movies with my chosen family.

BEST DRAG INFLUENCER Peaches Christ, Coco Peru, Charles Busch - the list is endless!

BEST STYLE ICON Bette Davis and Nina Hagen.

BEST GAY ICON Judy Garland.

BEST MUSICAL Gypsy and Drowsy Chaperone.

Jinkx Monsoon and Major Scales take their The Ginger Snapped show to Stafford Gatehouse Theatre on Monday 1 April and Birmingham Town Hall on Wednesday 3 April.

LET'S GET *Kinky!*

Kinky Boots lands in Birmingham's Gay Village

IN CONVERSATION WITH KINKY BOOTS STAR LOLA

Zone recently caught up with West End star Kayi Ushe, who will be appearing as drag queen Lola when Kinky Boots visits Birmingham this month...

What's the best thing about playing Lola in Kinky Boots, Kayi?
Being able to sink my teeth into such a multifaceted and exuberant character every day is such an incredible experience. But I can honestly say that the best thing about playing Lola is knowing how many people the character resonates with, and how empowered people feel after seeing the show

How easy is it for you personally to relate to the character? What's your personal experience of drag?
I have no personal experience of drag. I've admired it from a distance as an art form, and now, having done it and continuing to do it as this character, I have a much deeper appreciation for the holistically transformative art form that it is. It's really easy for me to personally relate to the character, and I think that's what makes this role, and this show, so unique. We've all been the oddball at some point in our lives, without realising that, actually, oddness and uniqueness is what makes us who we are. We shouldn't shy away from it.

Give us three good reasons why people from the Midlands LGBTQ+ community should bag themselves a ticket for Kinky Boots NOW!
Everybody should come and see this show - it really is a show for all. Come and feel seen. Come and feel represented. Come and let us raise you up!

Do you have a favourite one-liner from the show?
My favourite is "I'm not looking for you to say anything". I think it's so poignant because how someone looks, how they dress, how they feel comfortable when they're being themselves, isn't something they need anybody else's approval on; be that men in dresses, women in miniskirts, people wearing their cultural garb, people with tattoos - the list goes on!

How long does it take you to get into character?
On an average day, I get into work about two and a-half hours before the show, usually to stretch and warm up. Then, about two hours before the show, we start the makeup, which takes 45 minutes. Then there's a company vocal warm-up and parish notices. After that, it's back to the dressing room to add the costume, mics and the wig. I'll usually sing a few bits from the show and then head to the stage for my entrance.

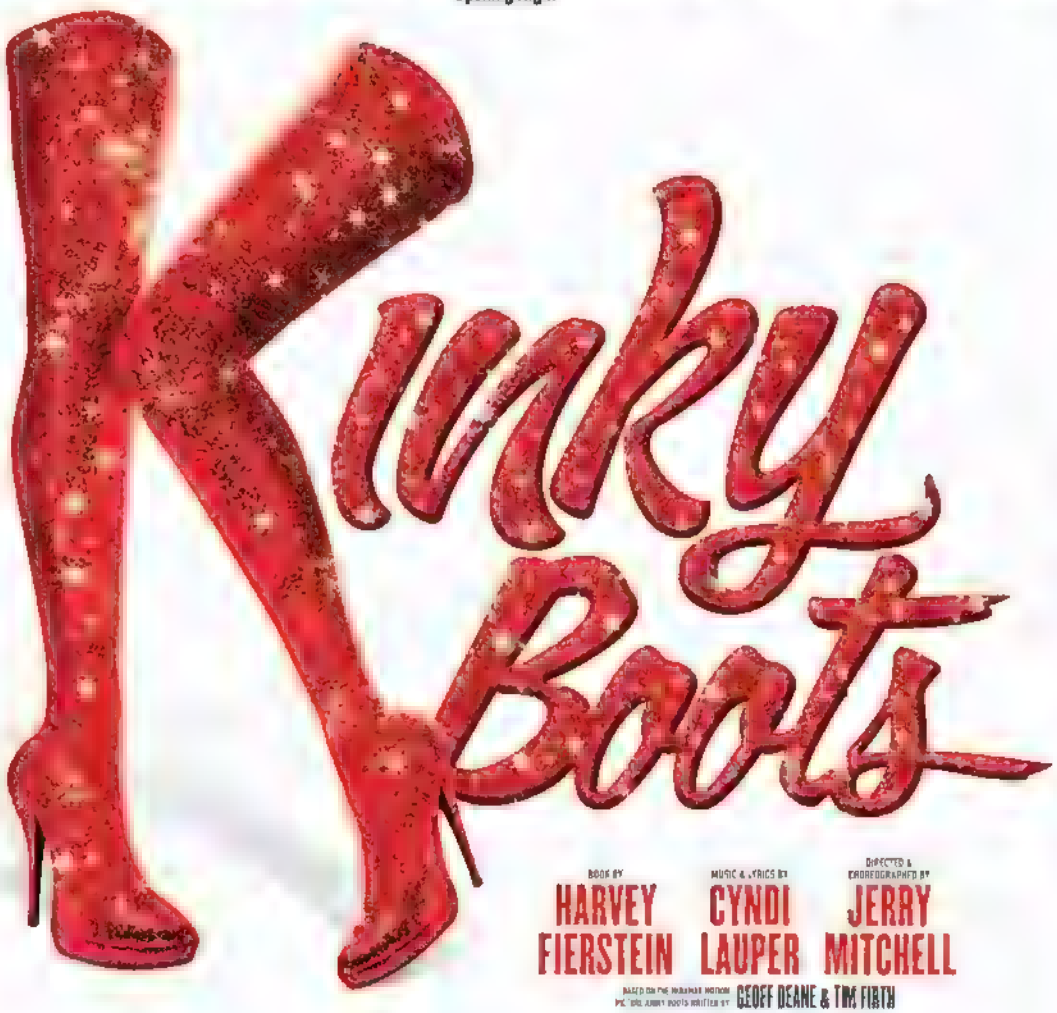
Did you have to have your boots specially made?
All my heels were custom-made by Jodie Morrison, owner of Steppin' Out. I was fitted for them on my 30th birthday in Chester, as it was the only time that worked for all of us, and I was already there performing in rep at the Storyhouse.

One of the Kinky Boots sentiments is Be Someone's Reason To Smile. What brings a smile to your face?
Seeing audience members up on their feet and singing along at the end of the show. It really is an incredible atmosphere, and one that I feel so happy and grateful to be a part of

★★★★★

"FIERCE, FEEL-GOOD FUN WITH A CAPITAL F"

Opening Night



BOOK BY
HARVEY FIERSTEIN

MUSIC & LYRICS BY
CYNDI LAUPER

DIRECTED & CHOREOGRAPHED BY
JERRY MITCHELL

BASED ON THE MIRAMAX MOTION PICTURE KINKY BOOTS WRITTEN BY GEOFF DEANE & TIM FIRTH

BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME

MON 11 - SAT 23 MARCH

TICKET SALES: **0844 338 5000***

birminghamhippodrome.com

*calls cost 4 5p per min. plus your phone company's access charge

11 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT...

Kinky Boots

THERE ARE 214 PAIRS OF SHOES/BOOTS IN THE SHOW

THE INSPIRATION

- Kinky Boots is set in Northampton.
- Kinky Boots was inspired by a true story. The original shoe factory's name was WJ Brooks Shoe Company. It was the BBC who nicknamed WJ Brooks the 'kinky boot' factory
- Charlie Price's journey is based on the true story of Steve Pateman, an Englishman who was struggling to save his family-run shoe factory from closure. Under pressure from changes in fashion and competition from abroad, he started to look for new markets. An unexpected call from a woman who ran a shop specialising in transgender glamour wear convinced him to try a line of women's shoes in men's sizes. He developed his line of 'kinky boots' under the brand name Divine Footwear.
- Kinky Boots is based on the 2005 independent film of the same name starring Chiwetel Ejiofor.

"SEX IS IN THE HEEL"

- Lola, Charlie and the Angels wear the highest heels at six inches, whereas the factory workers have heels at a height of four inches
- All of the made boots have a platform ranging from half an inch to an inch; some hidden, some not!
- Ninety percent of the male cast had not worn heels before appearing in Kinky Boots.
- Each 'finale boot', if it's laced up, has five metres of elastic used as a lace. Coloured elastic is used to match the boots.
- Each boot has been made to fit the wearer. There are 21 measurements taken around the foot and leg, and also an outline of the foot. Each leg is measured and can have a difference of up to an inch around the leg measurements.
A pair of shoes or boots can take up to a week to make, dependent on the design, height and leather used. A four-month period is set aside to make boots for an entire cast.

IN 2016, KINKY BOOTS WAS NOMINATED FOR SEVEN OLIVIER AWARDS AND WON THE AWARD FOR BEST NEW MUSICAL

Kinky Boots shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday 11 to Saturday 23 March

★★★★★
'LIFE-ENHANCING, BRILLIANTLY UNINHIBITED, ALL-SINGING AND DANCING'
Observer

ANGELA CARTER'S

WISE CHILDREN

ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY EMMA RICE

Belgrade Theatre Coventry

TUE 2 - SAT 6 APRIL
belgrade.co.uk

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

HARTSHORN-HOWK PRODUCTIONS

rotterdam

by Jon Brittain Directed by Domenech O'Brien Designer Ellen Perry

The hilarious and touching new comedy about gender, sexuality and being a long way from home

OLIVIER AWARDS WINNER 2017

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125TH ANNIVERSARY

MON 22 - WED 24 APR
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GRANDTHEATRE.CO.UK

What's On

CineQ Film Festival

Starting as a community cinema operating in Birmingham, CineQ aims 'to grow appetites and audiences' for Queer and LGBTQIA+ films. It also champions new queer cinema in the region, with a particular focus on the perspectives of Queer Trans & Intersex People Of Colour (QTIPOC)

This three-day event features a host of film screenings and workshops (including a filmmaker brunch with the award winning Campbell X), a night of performance from Second Self, and a screening of Rafiki, a Kenyan lesbian love story banned from its home country, where homosexuality is illegal.

Various locations in Birmingham - Friday 22 - Sunday 24 March

Liza Pulman Sings Streisand

A must-see for music lovers and in particular Barbra Streisand fans, Fascinating Aida's Liza Pulman here pays tribute to one of the finest talents of a generation, squeezing history, warmth and humour into her critically acclaimed show.

Direct from a sell out run at The Other Palace, Liza blends 'easy wit, flawless vocals and compelling storytelling' in a loving homage to a musical legend. Featured Streisand hits include Evergreen, People, New York State Of Mind, The Way He Makes Me Feel, Don't Rain On My Parade, The Way We Were, Second Hand Rose and You Don't Bring Me Flowers.

Stratford Playhouse - Saturday 16 March

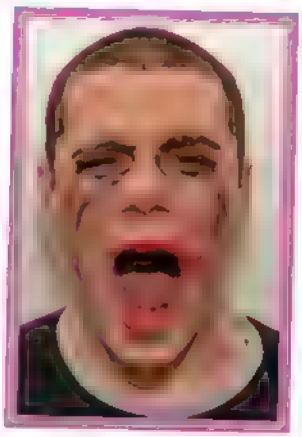
Julian Clary
Born To Mince

Everyone's favourite mincer is back with an outrageously camp new show

Julian will be murdering some well-known songs, reading you a sneak preview from his next memoir, A Night At The Lubricant, and making withering remarks about punters who're foolish enough to sit in the front row.

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre - Thursday 21 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury - Tuesday 26 March

If My Father Only Knew



Charlie is a young man grieving the loss of his mother, struggling in his relationship with his father, and determined not to reveal the secret with which he's been living...

Birmingham writer Nathalie Bázan presents her fifth show at the Old Joint Stock - and is more than likely about to enjoy her fifth sell out success too

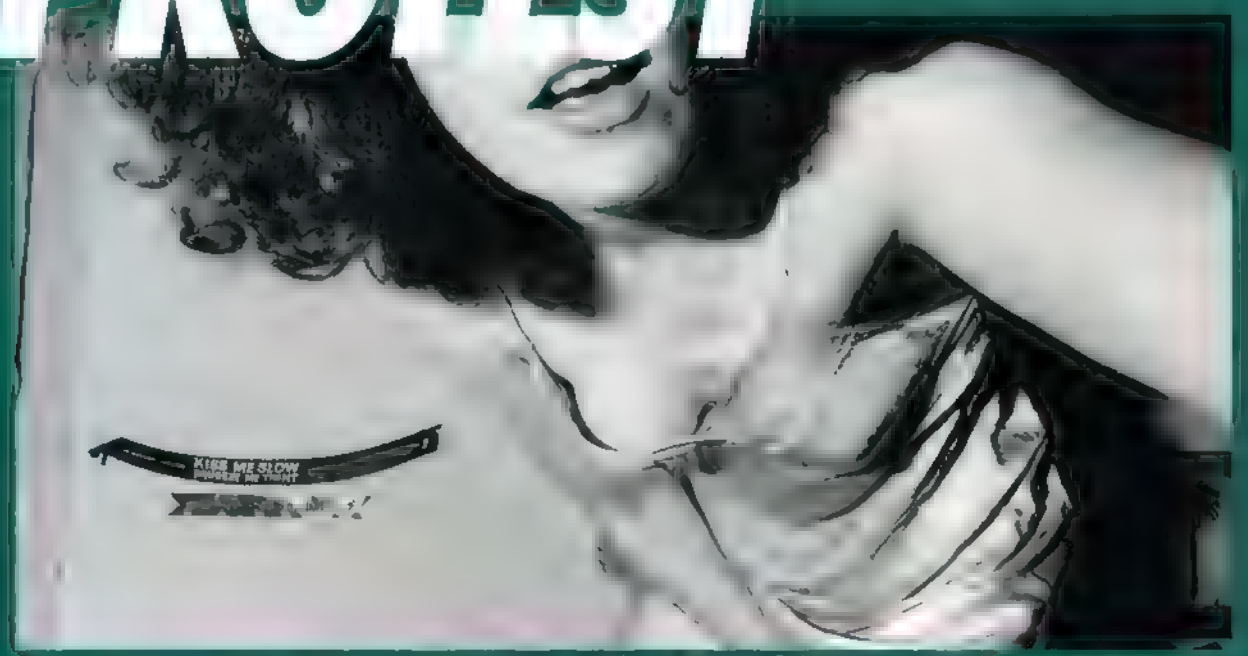
Focusing on themes of identity, sex and beauty in today's society, as well as the difficulties faced by young people wishing to express their true self, the play was originally showcased as a devised performance at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in 2017.

The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham - Tuesday 5 - Thurs 7 March

MUSEUM & ART GALLERY
BIRMINGHAM

Arts Council Collection

WOMEN POWER PROTEST



An Arts Council Collection National Partner Exhibition

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ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Birmingham M… …ction National Partner Arts Council Collection is mana… …y Southbank Centre on behalf of Arts Council England
Image: Angela … …ovil 1975, Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, L… …© Angela Kelly

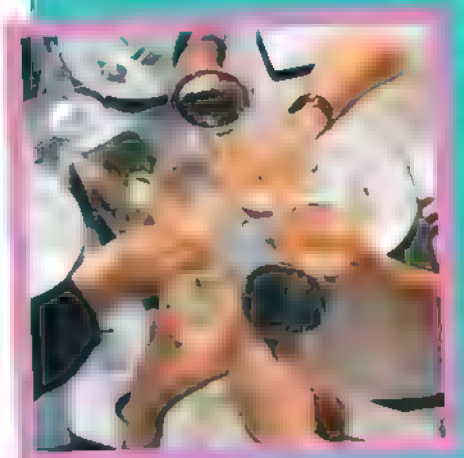
Birmingham Wine Weekend

returns this month

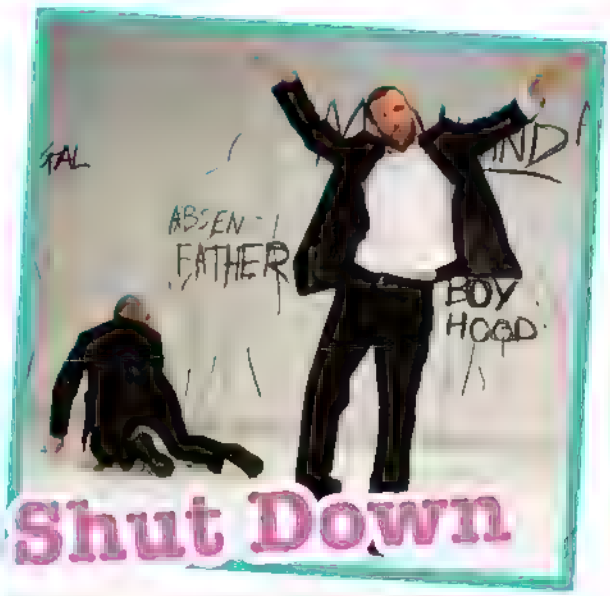
for a taste of the action

wristband wearers are in for a special treat

wine for just £4 at each venue, but also sees the introduction of a £4 cocktail option too! What's more, a handful of selected venues will be dishing up exclusive wine and canapé pairings for £6, giving festival goers more choice than ever before. Chin chin!



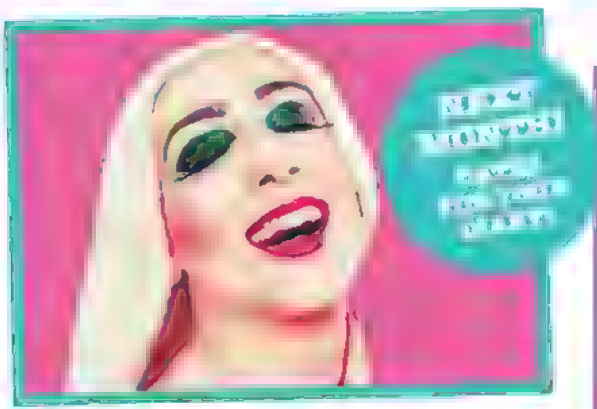
Various venues in Birmingham - Friday 22 - Sunday 24 March



Shut Down

Shut Down explores the spectrum of 21st century masculinity, investigating the pressures, contradictions and confusions that are part and parcel of being a man.. Vincent Dance Theatre's first ever all male production is timely, humorous and highly charged, with dance, spoken word, rap and real life testimony coming together to try and provide an answer to the question: what's it like to live as a man in the modern world?

Leicester Curve - Tuesday 26 March

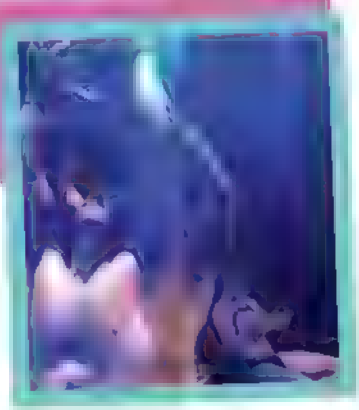


Why Isn't Everybody Talking About Fifi?

Jamie Campbell, the inspiration for hit West End musical Everybody's Talking About Jamie, is bringing a brand new show to Birmingham next month. Performing as his drag persona, Fifi La True, he presents a loose narrative based around the success of Everybody's Talking About Jamie. Fifi has been feeling forgotten by Jamie since the production became a West End hit, and sees her own show as her chance to shine...
Expect high energy choreography and a ridiculous number of fabulously fast costume changes.

Nightingale Club, Birmingham - Saturday 6 April

Jock Night



Top 5 Viral

What ya talkin' about on social media?

1. 20th anniversay of Queer as Folk

3. Save Birmingham Gay Village campaign

4. Alan Carr & Graham Norton judging Drag Race

2. Trump's Tears - Interview at Queerz

5. Remembering 50 years of the Nightingale

NHS

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Male only clinic sessions available.
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www.leicestersexualhealth.nhs.uk

Free, private and confidential sexual health checks for gay & bisexual men and men who have sex with men.

29

Day: Mondays
Time: 2 - 5pm (last appointment 4.45pm)
Place: 29 New Bond Street, LE1 4RQ

Splash Spa & Leisure

Day: Tuesdays
Time: 2 - 5pm (last appointment 4.45pm)
Place: 61 Bedford Street, LE1 3JR

Amigos Leisure

Day: Thursdays
Time: 2 - 5pm (last appointment 4.45pm,
Place: 30 Bedford Street South LE1 3JR

CLINIC X

TRADE

Day: Fridays
Time: 12 - 2pm (last appointment 1.45pm)
Place: 2nd Floor, 27 Bowling Green Street, LE1 6AS
You can also check out Trade Sexual Health
www.tradesexualhealth.com

WIN! FOUR VIP tickets to Birmingham Pride!

Who doesn't love Pride season? And here at Midlands Zone, we're giving one lucky reader the chance to win four VIP weekend tickets to Birmingham Pride!

Taking place on Saturday 25 & Sunday 26 May, the UK's largest two-day LGBTQ+ festival is this year bigger than ever. Acts including The Human League, Marc Almond, Sigala and Faithless have already been announced, with plenty more big names to come!

VIP tickets include front stage inner circle, priority bar for the main stage, cabaret marquee, Penthouse VIP lounge, a glass of Champagne on arrival each day, a food buffet both days and meet-and greets with selected artists in the VIP lounge!

Enter the competition via our Facebook page at @midlandszone

Bridge The Gap

Over 50 isn't 'over the hill'. Find out why by bridging the gap between youth and experience.

Ageing with Pride

Birmingham LGBT

NATIONAL LOTTERY FUNDED

bvsc the centre for

Contact us.
0121 643 0821
info@ageingwithpride.co.uk

Have your say!

Let us know what's on your mind...

SAVE BIRMINGHAM'S GAY VILLAGE?

I've long enjoyed Zone but I found your Save Our Gay Village campaign piece thoroughly annoying I'm heartily sick to death of our community adopting a 'gays versus the world' siege mentality Maybe once upon a time we were indeed David fighting Goliath, but come on, guys, get real - the world has moved on and we need to move on with it. I'm sick and tired of our community being viewed in that 'plucky underdog' kind of way. We've got a big voice nowadays and we know how to use it, so for Christ's sake let's stop taking the stance that we're some poor little minority group being battered and victimised by the big bad corporate machine. As ex Prime Minister Harold Macmillan once said, we've never had it so good!

Joseph Carter, Cradley Heath
(email address supplied)

While I applaud Zone's Save Our Gay Village campaign, I was also pleased to see that it acknowledged the importance of regeneration. Let's face it, the gay village area is maybe only one or two steps up from being a complete and utter dump. Apart from the venues - and hats off to them for injecting a real sense of life and vitality into Southside - the area only really has the recent apartment complexes to recommend it. So if there are going to be more of the same, that can surely only be a positive thing. Well-built and visually attractive, they give the area a modern, contemporary feel, which in turn enhances the image of our venues as vibrant, tuned-in places to party.

Regeneration is good for us, that's a plain and simple fact, and as long as the council isn't intending to bulldoze our venues, I for one don't see a problem with it.

Sara Phillips, Wolverhampton
(email address supplied)

What is Pride now – a f@*%g concert?

Maybe the theme for the big Pride events this year should be 'give us your cash'! I can't believe that to attend Manchester Pride, with their separate Manchester Pride Live concert, would cost over £76 for the two days! Brighton is no different, with theirs coming in just shy of £70. Kylie, Ariana - who gives a sh*t?

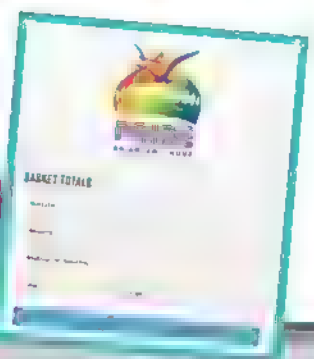
What is Pride now - a f@*%g concert? What's happened to the sense of community? To the feeling that we were gathering together due to shared experiences and a need to express ourselves en masse?

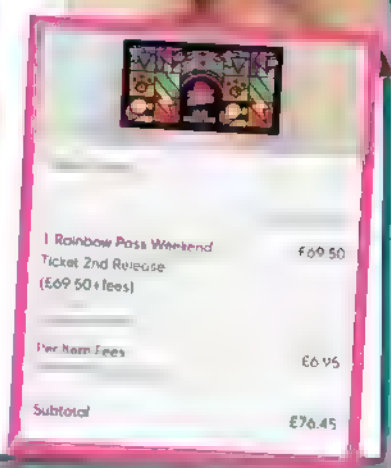
Initially when Pride started charging, I was happy, as it eliminated the yobs who came to gawk at the faggots and weirdos. Their presence was just intimidating, but have they all been replaced by Stans? Well, this gay doesn't have very many pink pounds, so I'm hoping Birmingham Pride doesn't get all greedy on my ass and keeps it under £40.

Dan Thomas, Walsall
(email address supplied)

Ariana Grande

Kylie Minogue





10 YEARS AGO

A look back at Midlands Zone from March 2009

GRAHAM NORTON DRAG

Is it really 10 years ago that Graham Norton dragged up to play the lead in the UK touring production of La Cage Aux Folles? Indeed it is, and he did so well in the role that he was nominated for seven Olivier Awards too!

10-year challenge:

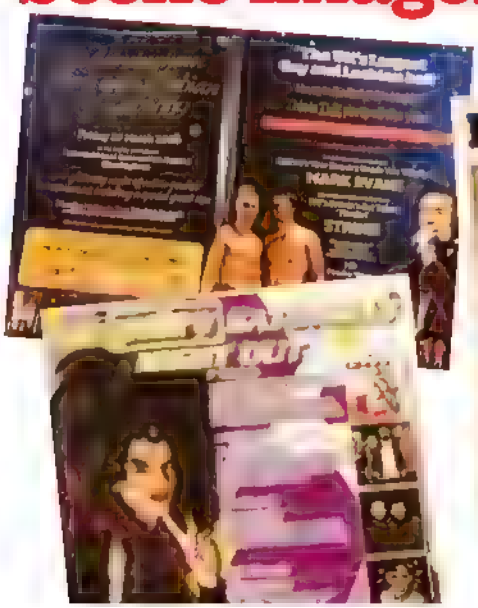
THIS MONTH:
HILLI FLETCHER & ANDY KING

FEB 2009 FEB 2019

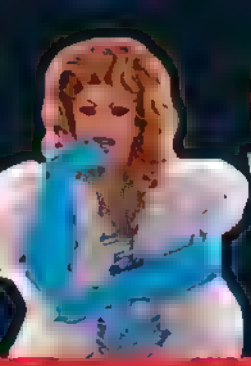
PRIDE GOES

Birmingham Pride Festival Director Lawrence Barton, pictured with team members from the Environment Agency - which sponsored Pride 2009.

Scene images from 2009



Hilli celebrates 10 glorious years
It was a happy 10th anniversary for Hilli Bishop-th last month the popular manager of The Fox Bar in Birmingham has now been working a and running the Lower Essex Street venue for a decade!
Hilli who last year won the Best Bar Person in The Country award, celebrated her 10 glorious years with a special party on 22 February and as you'd expect a good time was had by all! Dolly Savage The Divine Miss M Faye Bagley and even Hilli herself all performed at the gig.
So a happy anniversary from Zone Hilli and here's to your next decade in charge of Birmingham's favourite lesbian bar!



NEW!

Would you let MISS PENNY be your agony aunt?

VICKY JACKSON as PINK!

Live CHATER at the Gale in March

Shania Pain heads to the Midlands

SCENE

Your guide to the month ahead on the GAY SCENE

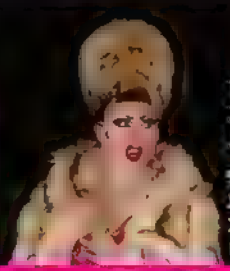
MARCH 2019

Return of the MAC

at Eden's 11th birthday bash!

What's On

AROUND THE MIDLANDS GAY SCENE



Brenda LaBeau

Thursday 21 March
Eden Bar, Birmingham

Danny Beard

Britain's Got Talent star Danny Beard returns to Birmingham's award winning Eden Bar this month - not once, but twice! Danny's certainly become one of the city's favourite drag acts in recent years, so if you still haven't seen him, make sure you head down to Eden You won't regret it!

Saturday 2 and Thursday 14 March
Eden Bar, Birmingham

Vicky Jackson as PINK

[redacted]

Friday 1 March, The Lion Bar & Club, Walsall
Monday 4 March, Havana Republic, Shrewsbury

Party with Marty

Birmingham drag legend Marty Smith is heading back to The Yard in Coventry this month. She'll be serving up her usual delightful dose of fun, games and naughty antics!

Friday 1 March at The Yard, Coventry

Man! It feels like Shania

Gracing the Midlands with her presence this month is drag extraordinary Shania Pain, she'll singing the songs that get you moving - and sure to be dropping some cheeky banter too!

Fri 22 March
The Village Inn, Birmingham

Friday 29 March at The Yard, Coventry

KY Kelly

Friday 15 March
The Yard, Coventry

Kara Van-Park

Friday 15 March
The Village Inn, Birmingham

Martha d'Arthur

Friday 1 March
The Village Inn, Birmingham

ARMANI D'YVINE

LIP SYNC EXTRAVAGANZA

Everyone loves a bit of Whitney, right? Along with some Tina Turner, Diana Ross and Shirley Bassey? Of course!

Well be prepared to be amazed by the outstanding Armani D'Vyne - all the way from Gran Canaria in Birmingham this month.

Yes indeed, Sequin Show Stoppers will be presenting a night starring Armani and hosted by the superb Divine Miss M

The evening will also feature Jenna Davinci as Cher and Liza - Peaches Munroe (Jenny June Paver) as Dolly Parton, and Dahliah Rivers as Bette Midler and Barbra Streisand

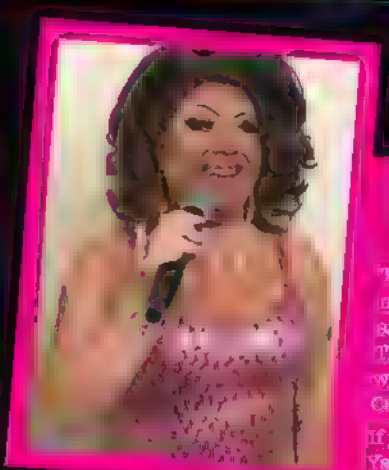
Friday 8 March at Eden Bar, Birmingham

ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

Whether you're Irish or not, it's great to celebrate St Patrick's Day! Pop along to some of the Midlands' favourite bars for a night of all things Irish and a grand ol' hooley!!

Saturday 16 & Sunday 17 March
Bar Diva, Dudley

Sunday 17 March
The Yard, Coventry
Glamorous, B'ham & Coventry



Fannie Coil

There's yet another night of cabaret to enjoy at Coventry gay venue The Yard - this time it's with the fantastic Fannie Coil!

If you haven't visited The Yard yet, then why not pop along?

Friday 22 March, The Yard, Coventry

DRAG WITH NO NAME

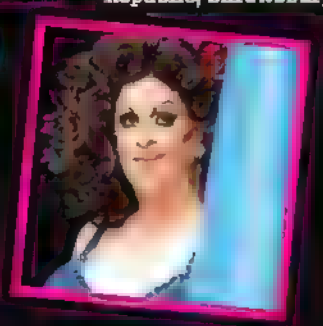
The always-fantastic Drag With No Name returns to the Midlands. Expect an evening of quality comedy and re-workings of popular songs. From Gaga to Britney, Jessie J to my big fat Gypsy wedding, Kerry Katona to Susan Boyle... no one is safe! Don't miss it!

Friday 8 March at The Village Inn, Birmingham
Monday 1 April at Havana Republic, Shrewsbury

Lola Lasagne! She is a showgirl

There's another brilliant night in prospect at Coventry venue The Yard this month, as Lola Lasagne returns to the stage! Expect lots of laughter and fun, plus a good old-fashioned sing-song!

Friday 8 March at The Yard, Coventry



Hookups =
SQUiRT
.org
SQUiRT
.org
SQUiRT
Visit www.squirt.org
to hook up today

What's On

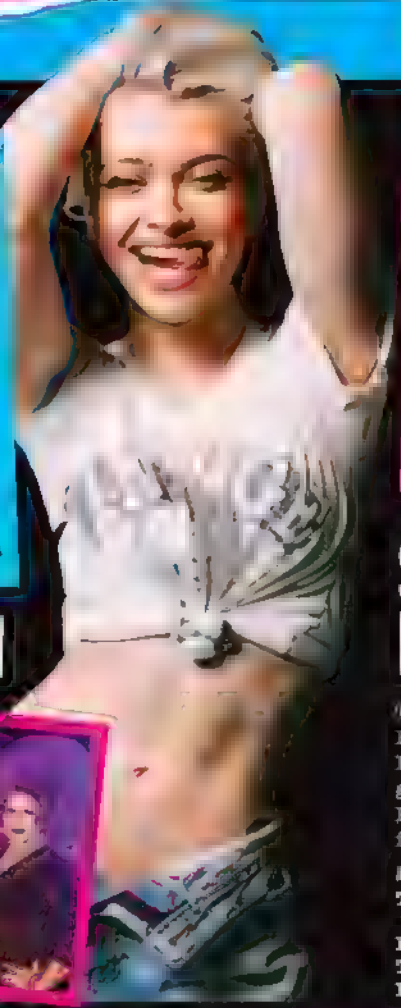
Alice Chater

This month head down to Birmingham s biggest The Nightingale Club, where you can catch the next big pop sensation Alice Chater

She s dazzled with the video to her banging floor-filler Hourglass and she s supported the amazing MNEK on his UK tour!

Catch her

Saturday 30 March
Nightingale Club, Birmingham



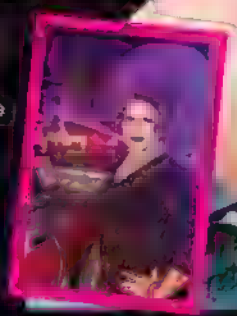
RETURN OF THE MAC

Thursday 7 March and Saturday 30 March
Eden Bar, Birmingham

GAVINA FUN

Get down to Bar Diva for classsy camp and chart floor fillers not to be missed! You'll be sure of laughs the way with Gavina

Saturday 2 & Saturday 16 March
Bar Diva, Dudley

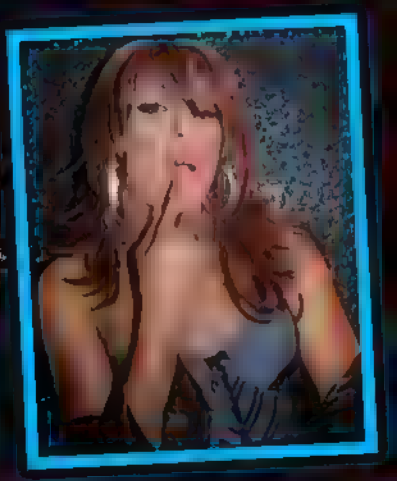


Sandra London

The Whore of Hampstead Heath returns to the Midlands this month to get you in the party spirit. Performing all her favourites live on stage!

Sat 23 March,
The Flag ,Worcester

Friday 29 February
The Village Inn, Birmingham



OTHER EVENTS INCLUDE:

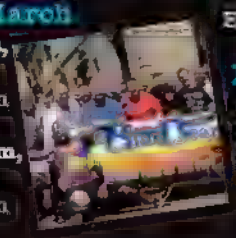
Fri 1 March
Burlesque Night, Eden, Birmingham

Sat 2 March
Breakfast Club Special Ft ILL PHILL, Chic, B'ham
1st Birthday Party, Glamorous, Coventry

Sun 3 March
Saucy Sundays with LaQueefa & Cherry Liquor, Missing Bar, Birmingham

Sat 9 March
Kisstory ft Justin Wilkes, Chic, Birmingham
BFM, Birmingham Fetish Men, Eden, Birmingham

Fri 15 March
Mids Bears, Eden, Birmingham
XXL Birmingham, The Core, Birmingham



Sat 16 March
Charlie Hides, Eden, Birmingham

Sun 17 March
Leather Social, Eden, Birmingham

Mon 18 March
Ginny Lemon, Havana Republic, Shrewsbury

Sat 23 March
Club Scritches, Morrissey Night, Eden, Birmingham

Thu 28 March
Felix Le Freak, Eden, Birmingham

Fri 29 March
Bear's Birmingham Bash, Eden, Birmingham

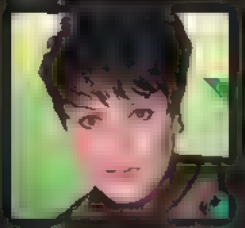
GAY BARS & CLUBS IN THE MIDLANDS...

Birmingham

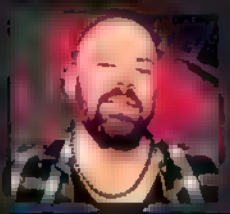
EDEN BAR

Sherlock St, B5 6NB
Tel: 0121 622 1953
theedenbar.co.uk
/eden.bar

EVERY WEDNESDAY 8PM
Quizzical with DJ Yogi
EVERY FRIDAY & SUNDAY
Karaoke & Disco with DJ Nikki



EVERY SATURDAY
DJ Tom Lee & DJ Pooi alternate weeks.



THE LOFT

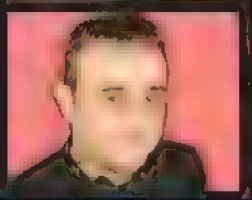
12 Bromsgrove St,
B5 6RG
Tel: 0121 6222 444
theloftlounge.co.uk
/The-Loft-Lounge

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH
Queeny's Quiz
EVERY MONDAY
Monday Cocktail Club 2 for £10
EVERY WEDNESDAY
Wing it Wednesday - Kilo of wings and drink £10

MISSING BAR

Hurst St, B5 6NU
Tel: 0121 622 4256
missingbar.co.uk
/missingbar

EVERY MONDAY UNTIL 4AM
Ministry of Pound with DJ Mike Emery



EVERY TUESDAY
Karaoke with Gavina Vagina

EVERY THURSDAY 9PM
Throwback Thursdays with DJ Gavina

EVERY FRIDAY 9PM
Hit Mix and Her with DJ Mike Emery & Gavina Vagina

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS
Back to Back Saturdays with DJ Matty, DJ Mike Emery and host Twiggy

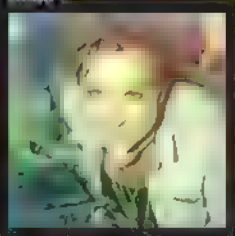
EVERY SUNDAY 8.30pm & 10.30pm
Double Cabaret with Amy LaQueefa

NIGHTINGALE CLUB

Kent St, B5 6RD
Tel: 0121 622 1718
nightingaleclub.co.uk
/thenightingaleclub

EVERY THURSDAY
Pounded! with £1 drinks all night

EVERY FRIDAY
Absolute Anthems with DJ's Corey Hadley and Scott Hilton

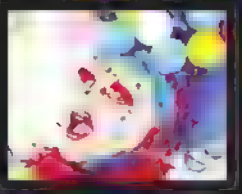


EVERY SATURDAY
Nightingale Saturdays with free entry until 12pm

THE VILLAGE INN

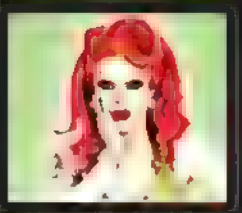
Hurst St, B5 4BD
Tel: 0121 622 4742
villageinnbirmingham.co.uk
/villageinnbirmingham

EVERY MONDAY 9PM
Bingo with Queeny



EVERY TUESDAY
Pick n Mix with Ginny Lemon + Blanche

EVERY WEDNESDAY
Karaoke with Charlotte the Harlotte



EVERY THURSDAY
Miss Marty + Miss Penny alternate weeks

EVERY SUNDAY
Ysiee Black + special guests

PLUS THESE VENUES

BAR JESTER
Holloway Circus, B1 1EG

BOLTZ CLUB
Lower Essex St, B5 6QP
Tel: 0121 668 6888

CLUB CHIC
28 Horsefair, B11DD

THE CORE
Sherlock St, B5 6NB
Tel: 0121 622 2797

DEVILS KITCHEN
Kent St, B5 6NB

FOUNTAIN INN
Wrentham St, B5 6QL
Tel: 0121 622 1452

THE FOX
17 Lower Essex St,
B5 6SN Tel: 0121 622 3213

GLAMOROUS
27-35 Hurst St, B5 4BD
Tel: 0121 622 5912

SIDEWALK
Hurst Street, B5 6SE
Tel: 0121 666 6220

THE WELLINGTON
72 Bristol St, B5 7AH

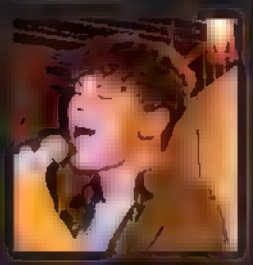
CANDI CAINE'S CABARET LOUNGE
3 Church Street, WS11 1DE

GLAMOROUS COVENTRY
88 Short St, CV1 2LX

THE YARD
11-12 Bull Yard, CV1 1LH
Tel: 02475 012 959
theyardcoventry.co.uk
/TheYardCoventry

EVERY TUESDAY
Jelly Cube quiz night

EVERY WEDNESDAY
Open mic night hosted by Tom Barnwell

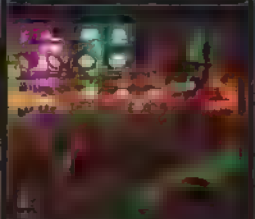


EVERY THURSDAY 8PM
Free Shot Karaoke with Jupiter & Minerva

EVERY SATURDAY
DJ Richard Alexander with Jupiter and Minerva

EVERY SUNDAY
Bingo, Play Your Cards Right and Deal or No Deal with weekly cash prizes of over £100

BAR DIVA
76 Lower Plaza Mall, King Street, DY2 8NZ
/BarDivaThePlaceToBe



EVERY MONDAY
Manic Monday with Miss Annie

EVERY THURSDAY
Get Pounded Karaoke with Miss Annie

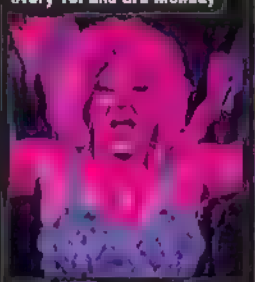
EVERY FRIDAY
Freaky Friday's with DJ Mikey

EVERY SATURDAY
Cabaret Saturdays with Miss Annie

EVERY SUNDAY
Ring & Ride with Mo & Margaret

HAVANA REPUBLIC
18-21 Abbey Foregate, SY2 6AE
Tel: 01743 271821
havanarepublic.co.uk
/HavanaRepublic

EVERY MONDAY
Fabulous Mondays with Miss Penny and guest cabaret every 1st and 3rd Monday



THE PEACH TREE
18-21 Abbey Foregate
Tel: 01743 355055
thepeachtree.co.uk
/ThePeachTreeRestaurant

GOSSIP
5 Hope Street, ST1 5BT
Tel: [illegible]

PINK
93 Stafford Street, ST1 1LS
Tel: 01782 272772

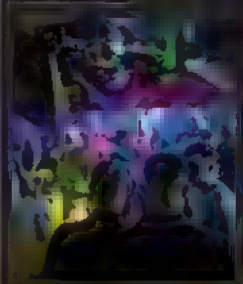
THREE FURNACES
30 Bridgnorth Rd, Madeley, TF7 4JB, 01952 588521

THE LION
Birchills St, WS2 8NG
Tel: 01922 610977

THE RED LION
Park St, WS1 1NW
Tel: 01922 637790

GORGEOUS
School St, WV1 4LF
Tel: 01902 427247
/gorgeousbar

EVERY SATURDAY 10PM
EGO Saturdays



THE FLAG
50 Lowesmoor, WR1 2SG
Tel: 01905 780467

VELVET CLUB
Angel Row, WR1 3QN
Tel: 01905 20218

THE CROWN INN
40 Curzon St, DE1 1LL
Tel: 01332 381742

BOXED BAR & MUSIC VENUE
(Bossa @ Boxed) Gay every first Sunday of the month
110 Granby St, LE1 1DL

DOVER CASTLE
34 Dover St, LE1 6PT
Tel: 0116 255 3052

HELSINKI
94 Rutland St, LE1 1SB
Tel: 0116 254 7568

RAINBOW & DOVE
185 Charles St, LE1 1LA
Tel: 0116 254 7568

THE BOSTON
College St, NN1 2QP
Tel: 01604 604404

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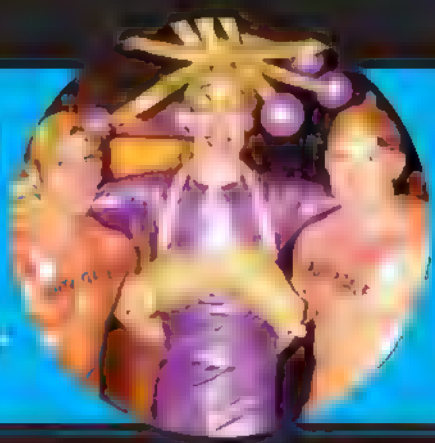
NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

We look back on 50 years of The Nightingale...



THE YARD

February was a great month for cabaret at The Yard, with Miss Penny and the UK's number one Kylie tribute gracing the stage for Valentine's Day.

This month the venue is celebrating St Patrick's Day by hosting a free all-day event on Sunday 17 March, complete with Irish dancers, live music, Irish bingo with Rockella and special offers on your favourite Irish tipples!

the yard

MARCH Cabaret

EVERY FRIDAY

1ST MISS MARTY
8TH LOLA LASAGNE
15TH KY KELLY
22ND FANNIE COIL
29TH SHANIA PAIN

HOSTED BY ROCKELLA

St Patricks Day

Irish Dancers Hot Food

Live Music

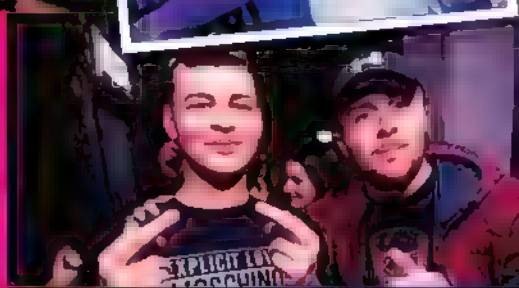
SUNDAY 17TH MARCH

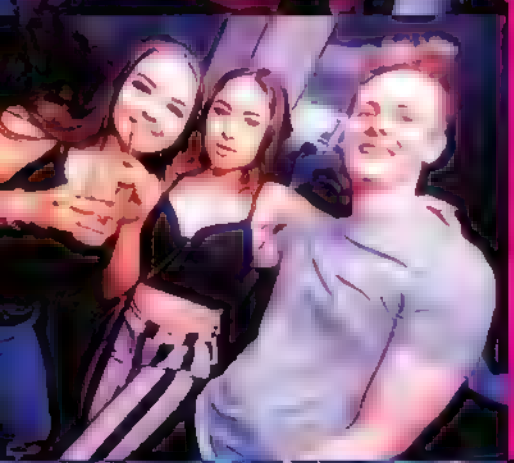
THE NIGHTINGALE

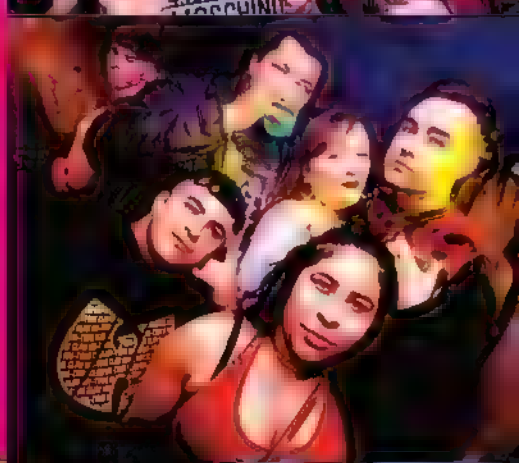
BIRMINGHAM

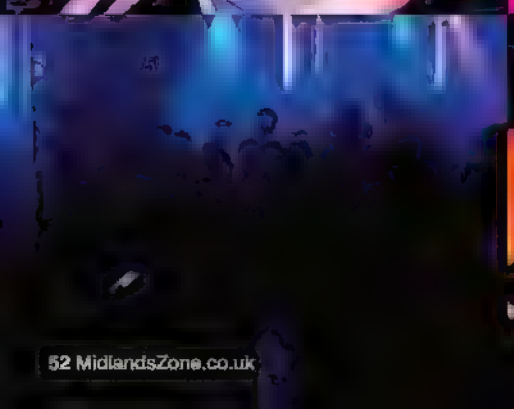
After the huge success of singles Bad Vibe and Wondering, the girl squad M.O stormed the Nightingale's stage last month - and they'll be back in Brum for Birmingham Pride too!

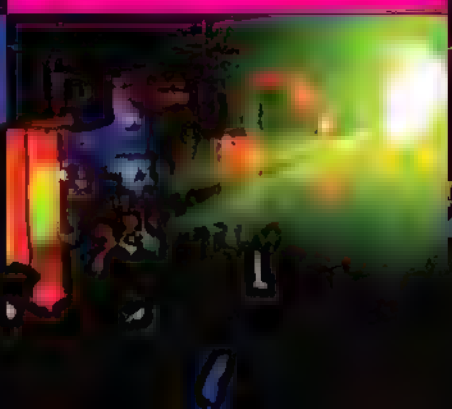
On Sat 30 March, Alice Chater, a 23-year-old British musician, introduces herself to the Nightingale crowd. From modelling to acting to uploading covers to YouTube, Alice is set to be big news in 2019!



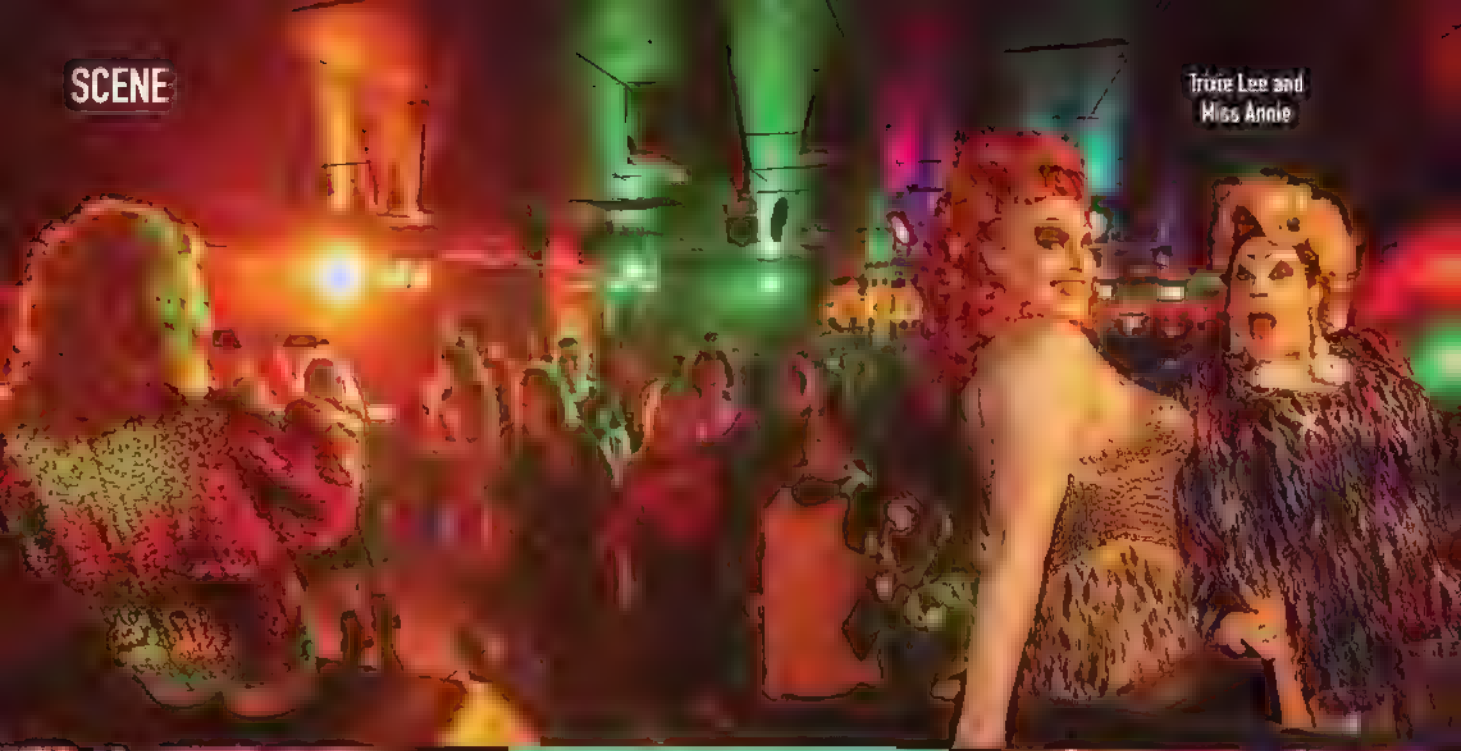








Girl band M.O stormed the Gate



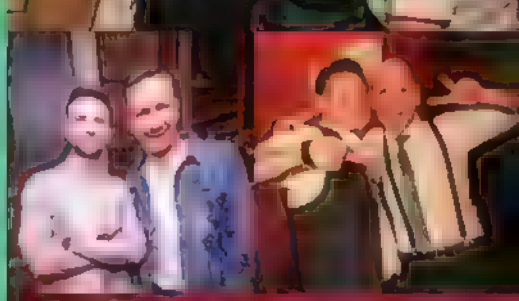
Trixie Lee and Miss Annie

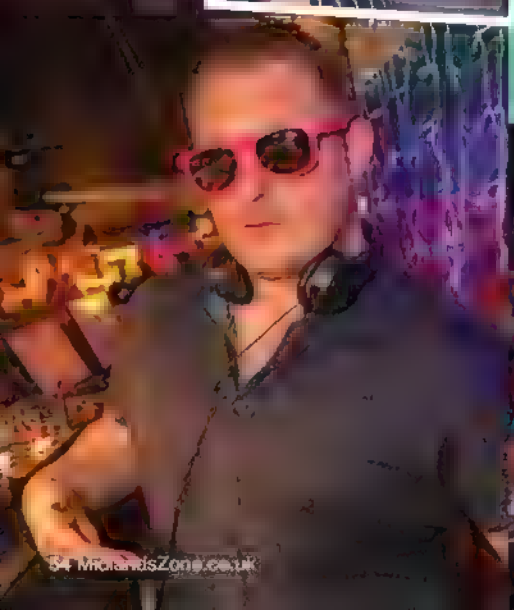
BAR DIVA

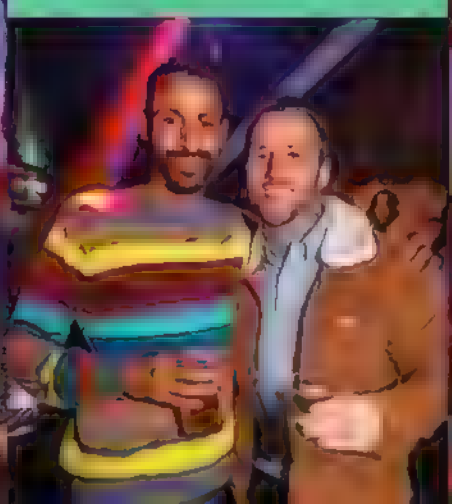
As you can tell from our latest photos, there's never a dull moment at Dudley's Bar Diva!

With a packed programme Thursday to Monday every week, including Thirsty Thursdays (see opposite) with a 1p drink deal, karaoke and a cash grabber, what's not to love!?

This month the venue will also be celebrating St Patrick's Day across the weekend of Saturday the 16th & Sunday the 17th. Expect plenty of fun and games!







BAR DIVA!

MARCH

THIRSTY THURSDAY

WTF?!

£1.50 SHOTS & BOMBS
£2.50 DRINKS ALL NIGHT

FIRST DRINK FOR JUST 1P

TRIXIE LEE

KARAOKE & CASH GRABBER

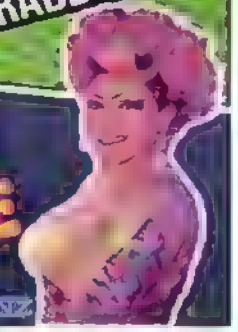
BANG

£3 ENTRY
(LAST ENTRY 12AM)

OPEN 9PM - 3AM

ZAAAP

MISS ANNIE



1P DRINKS INC. JDE SINGLE HOUSE SPIRITS AND MIXER SELECTED BOTTLES AND PINTS

THURSDAY'S	THIRSTY THURSDAY'S WITH MISS ANNIE & TRIXIE LEE
FRIDAY'S	FREAKY FRIDAY'S WITH DJ MIKEY
SATURDAY'S	CABARET SATURDAY'S TOP DRAGS & HOSTED BY MISS ANNIE
SUNDAY'S	RING & RIDE FUN, GAMES AND PRIZES WITH MISS MO BILITY AND MARGARET
MONDAY'S	MANIC MONDAY BOGOF KARAOKE WITH MISS ANNIE 'TIL 1AM

ST. PATRICKS WEEKEND

SAT 16TH + SUN 17TH

FUN GAMES ALL WEEKEND

BAR DIVA

ZONE AWARD WINNER

Mall Ring Street DY7 8NZ Dudley

VILLAGE INN

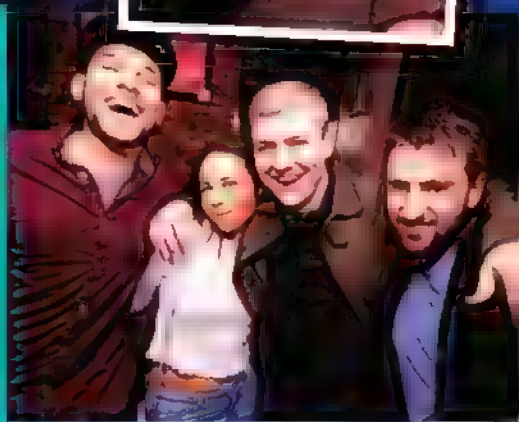
BIRMINGHAM

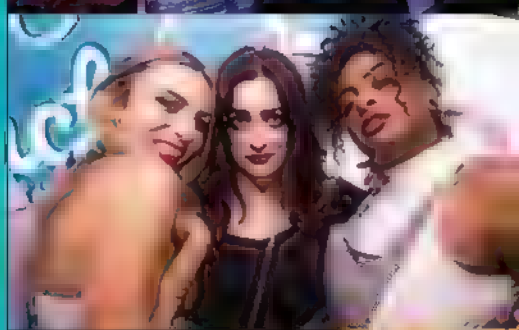
A great month of live Friday night cabaret at The Village Inn features Martha D'Arthur, Drag With No Name, Kara Van-Park and Shania Pain

Sandra then rounds things off nicely with her monthly residency.

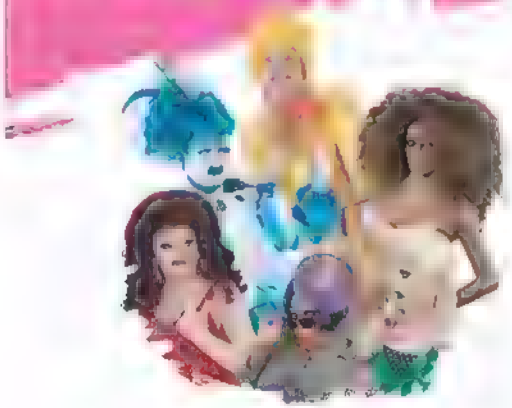
There's plenty going on at The Village Inn during the week too, including the chance to play bingo with Queeny (see opposite for details).

And you can also check out this month's Midlands Zone cover girl, Yshee Black, plus special guests on a Sunday night!





MONDAYS	TUESDAYS	WEDNESDAYS	THURSDAYS	SUNDAYS
£120 WEEKLY	GINNY LEMON'S WEEKLY	KARAOKE WITH		



MARCH CABARET

THE VILLAGE INN

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HAVANA REPUBLIC

SHREWSBURY

The biggest gay Monday night out in the Midlands, Havana Republic's Fabulous Mondays event is never short of fun and frolics.

This month sees special guest cabaret nights from Vicky Jackson, Ginny Lemon and Drag With No Name (see opposite).

HAVANA ★ REPUBLIC

PRESENTS

Miss Penny's FABULOUS MONDAYS!

THE BIGGEST GAY MONDAY NIGHT OUT IN THE MIDLANDS

special guest cabaret nights

MON 11 MAR — VICKY JACKSON AS PINK

MON 18 MAR — GINNY LEMON

MON 1 APR — DRAG WITH NO NAME

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Mary Mac

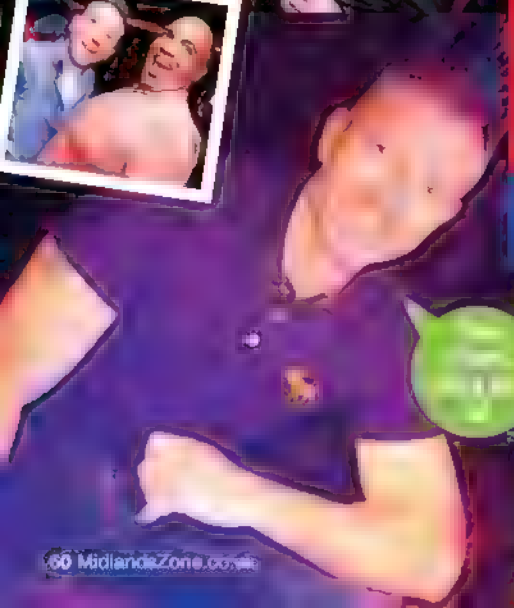
EDEN BAR

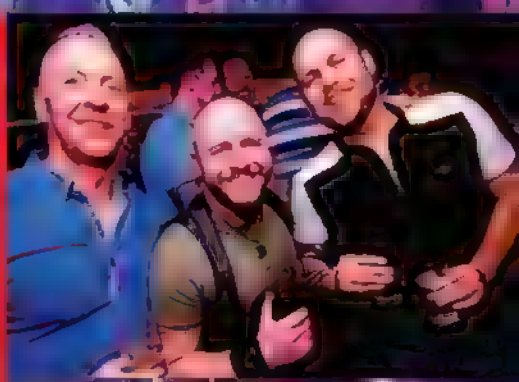
BIRMINGHAM

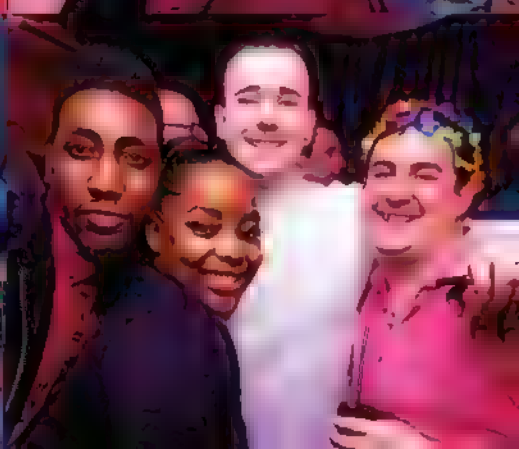
Another great night with the sensational Mary Mac – and she's back for Eden's 11th BIRTHDAY celebrations on Sat 30 March too!

Eden have another great line-up this month (see opposite), including an EXCLUSIVE appearance from Armani D'vyne, all the way from Gran Canaria – it's not to be missed!

There's also the chance to see last year's winner of Drag Idol UK - Felix Le Freak - performing live on Thurs 28 March!







MARCH eden

FRI 1st — **BURLESQUE NIGHT** SOLD OUT!

SAT 2nd — **DANNY BEARD**

THUR 7th — **MARY MAC** LOSING HER EDEN THURSDAY NIGHT VIRGINITY! COME ALONG TO MARY'S 1st Thursday Night!

FRI 8th — **SEQUIN SHOWSTOPPERS**

A night of DIVAS for ONE NIGHT ONLY. Lip sync Queen ARMANI D'VYNE comes all the way from FunnyBoys in Gran Canaria to be Dame Shirley Bassey, Tina Turner , Diana Ross and Whitney Houston.
With local support from Jenna Davinci, Peaches Munroe and DahBah Rivers.
Your host for the evening is Birmingham legend Divine Miss M - Tickets £6 in advance, more on the door.

SAT 9th — **BFM** BIRMINGHAM FETISH MEN

THUR 14th — **DANNY BEARD**

FRI 15th — **MIDS BEARS**

SAT 16th — **CHARLIE HIDES**

SUN 17th — LEATHER SOCIAL

THUR 21st — **BRENDA LaBEAU**

SAT 23rd — CLUB SCRITCHES Sat. Afternoon dubscritches.co.uk
MORRISSEY NIGHT IN THE MARQUEE

THUR 28th — **FELIX LE FREAK**
WINNER OF DRAG IDOL UK 2018

FRI 29th — BEAR'S BIRMINGHAM BASH
DJ ANDREW CLARKE (WOODY BEAR)

SAT 30th — **MARY MAC** EDEN'S BIRTHDAY!

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WEDNESDAYS 8PM
WITH DJ YOGI SpeedQuizzing

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WITH DJ NIKKI

DJ TONI LEE
SAT 2nd & SAT 16th
SAT 30th

DJ PONI
SAT 9th & SAT 23rd

DJ NIKKI
FRI & SUN

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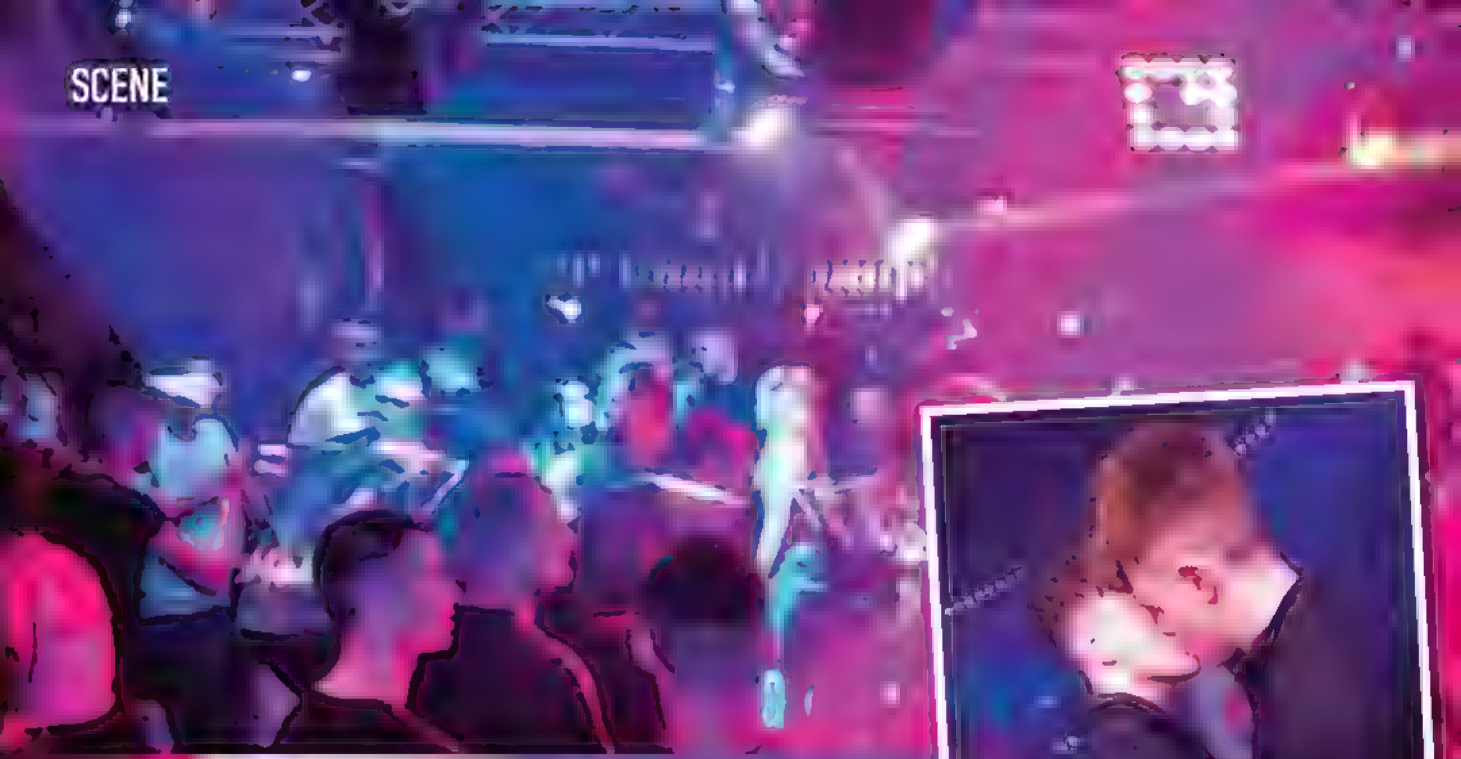
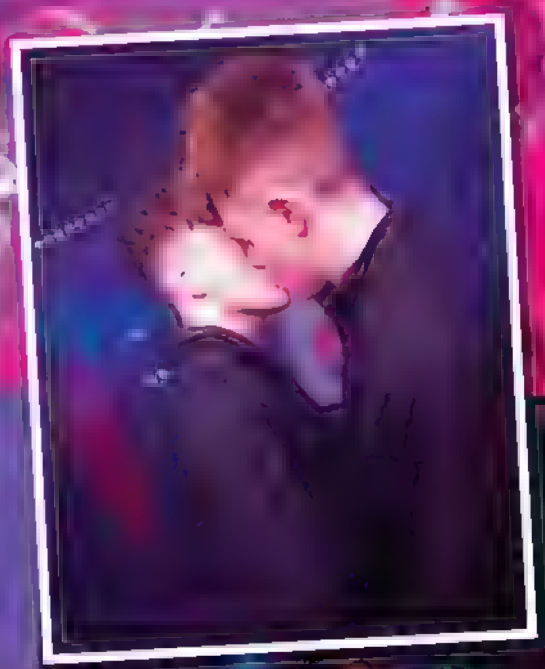


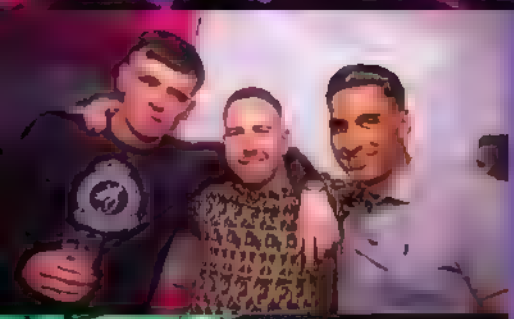


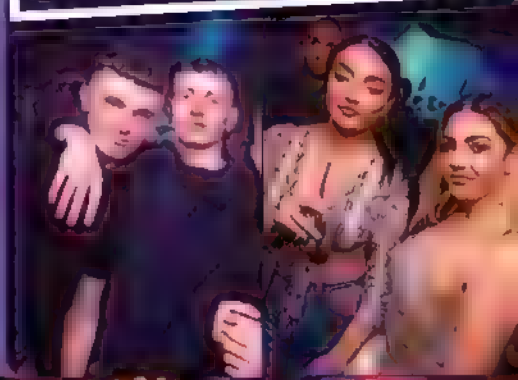
GORGEOUS

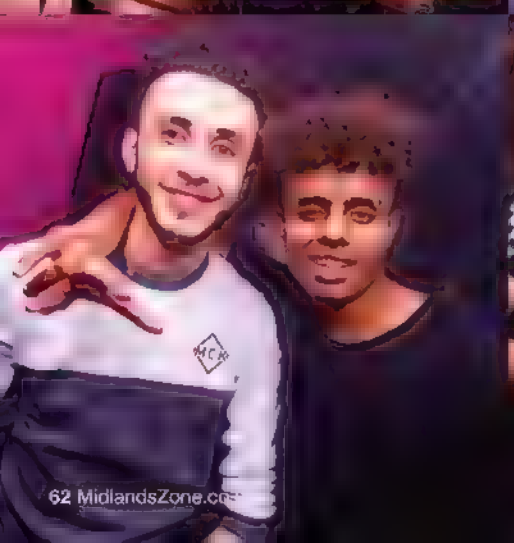
WOLVERHAMPTON

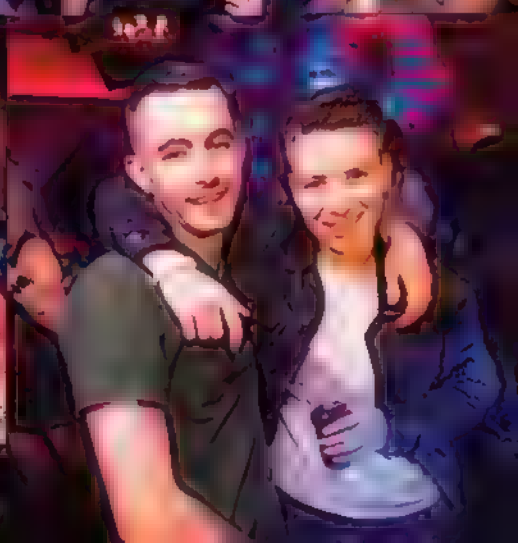
Home to one of Wolverhampton's busiest club nights, Gorgeous hosts Ego every Saturday night from 11pm till 6am. With a mashup of commercial R&B, chart-toppers, anthems, house & bass, there's something for everyone.

Students can also get 20% off entry and drinks with a valid student ID card.









gorgeous
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We're looking for bloggers and people who would like to write or get involved in some way with Midlands Zone! Interested? Yes? Then either contact us with a private message on our Facebook page or email editor@midlandszone.co.uk

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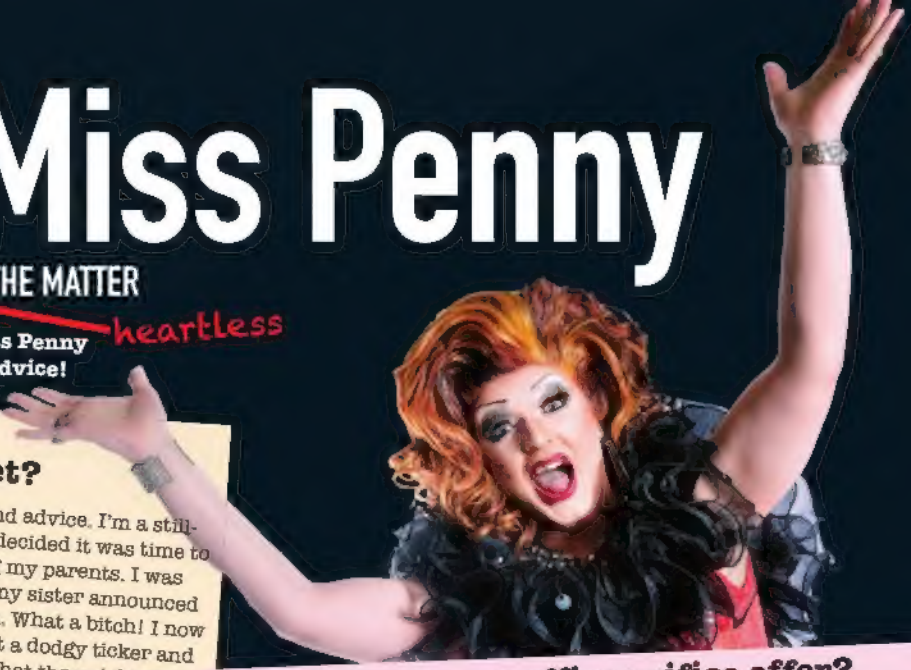
Dear Miss Penny

GETTING TO THE ~~HEART~~ heartless OF THE MATTER

This month it's the turn of Miss Penny to give you sound agony aunt advice!



Should sister act keep me in the closet?

I'm in desperate need of some sound advice. I'm a still-in-the-closet lesbian who recently decided it was time to step out into the daylight by telling my parents. I was building up to the challenge when my sister announced to our folks that she too is a lesbian. What a bitch! I now don't know what to do. My dad's got a dodgy ticker and my mum's already worried about what the neighbours will say. Can I risk shaming her further and giving my old fella a cardiac arrest in the process, or should I just carry on pretending I enjoy cock?

MISS PENNY: Well, there's nothing worse than someone stealing the limelight, is there?! Don't beat about the bush - or in your case, do! Tell them. It's like a band-aid - rip it off and reveal the gash, so to speak! No point denying yourself what you enjoy and lying to yourself that a large turgid penis is what you desire, when really it's a moist luscious labia! Tell your parents, and rain on your sister's parade - and keep some defibrillators next to you, just in case!

Should I make an office orifice offer?

I'm in love with a guy at work and don't know what to do about it. I think he's straight - he's got a girlfriend and two kids from a previous relationship, and he likes talking about sport and other macho things like that. I've tried everything to dampen my ardour, including getting into work early so that I can wank myself stupid in the gents before he arrives, but by elevenses I'm always hot for him again. Should I try to learn about sport so that he wants to hang out with me, and then hope that he reveals his true colours and pins me against the office photocopier with his big hairy hands?

MISS PENNY: Is there not an office party due? These things always come to light at those. Maybe organise one. Nothing better than a man in a suit who's hot and sexy. Then he presses by you as he reaches for something from the stationary cupboard and you feel his large member pressed against your... sorry, I digress! See if he fancies an after-work drink, keep the wine flowing and see what happens. You could learn about sport if you like, but make sure it's a good conversation-starter with a subtle hint, so water sports might be a good thing.
I wish you all the best in your endeavour and look forward to a letter telling me about any developments.

Ooh-bi-doo, I wanna be like you!

I've seen your show many times and think you're the absolute queen of drag. I'd love to be a drag act myself and regularly spend time pouting in the mirror, telling disgusting jokes in front of my grandparents and wearing my mum's high heels. Can you offer me any useful hints and tips to help me achieve my ambition?

MISS PENNY: Why thank you very much for your lovely comments. Okay, so a few things first. I've never told dirty jokes to my grandparents, because they're dead. I've never worn my mum's high heels cos I'm an 11 and she's a seven. And thirdly, never pout, because it looks like you're impersonating a cat's arse. But useful info? Yes, here you go... Be funny, interact with customers as much as you can during your performance, be it with jokes or as part of a number. Work your way up and always be sufficiently humble to do charity nights or guest slots at any point in your career. Listen and respect your peers too, as they will help you along if you work hard and put in the effort. But I can't stress enough that funny is where it lies. You can have the best makeup and aspheric but make it funny!

Beating the bully boys

I'm a 15-year-old boy who gets repeatedly bullied at school by homophobic idiots with nothing better to do. The bullying is only verbal but hurts like crazy, and I was wondering whether there were any witty reposts I could use that might make it stop happening. The bullies say things to me like, "you take it up the Arsenal, you do" and "anybody got any peas to go with this faggot?" How can I best respond, Miss Penny? So far I've tried saying 'fuck off' and walking away at a brisk pace, but then they all start shouting things like "Phwoar, look at the arse on that!" and "he's got more mince than a Mr Kipling pie!" Please help.

MISS PENNY: Firstly, they choose to be homophobic, so really it's their problem. I would suggest a swift clock around the head with a handbag concealing a brick, but maybe not at school. I think there are a few responses you could use, though: (1) Before you judge me, maybe you should google yourself. (2) Why are you so interested? Wanna try it? (3) If you're not careful, I'll take you to the bike shed and make your arsehole look like the Japanese flag. (4) You call yourself straight, but then so is spaghetti until it's hot and wet... Personally I'd suggest you don't say anything but instead develop the 'resting bitch face' look. Then develop the 'I'm gonna ruin you when you least expect it' look. Your face should always be able to tell people to fuck off more than your mouth.

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